



Measuring the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Heriot-Watt University

School of Management and Languages

April, 2016

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Abstract

This thesis presents evidence of how immediacy affects consumer engagement behaviour in a social media setting. It answers the research question: Does immediacy influence consumer engagement behaviours with brands on Facebook? This research context is important and timely because of the rapidly increasing usage of social media by consumers and the resultant unexplored marketing challenges faced by brand managers. This thesis is informed by Social Impact Theory (SIT) (Latané, 1981), which proposes that immediacy is a determinant of influence in off-line environments. This study focuses upon three forms of immediacy, physical, social and temporal, that are identified within prior literature. This thesis measures the effect and develops SIT to account for immediacy as a social influence determinant of social media behaviour.

The thesis follows a mixed method approach using focus groups and experimental design to measure the impact of each form of immediacy on four types of engagement behaviour: page liking, content liking, content sharing and content commenting. A series of three focus groups and three experimental studies were conducted with a total of 312 student participants who were presented with Facebook pages (created specifically for this study). Each Facebook page treatment was modified so that it contained either a high, low or neutral levels of each of the three types of immediacy identified in the literature and the subsequent change in participant engagement behaviour was measured. The results show that social immediacy significantly affects brand engagement intentions in terms of page liking, content liking and content sharing, whereas physical immediacy significantly affected page liking and content liking intentions. Temporal immediacy did not show any effects on the engagement intentions being measured in this thesis.

This thesis presents three original contributions to knowledge. First, it makes a theoretical contribution by measuring the effects of three types of immediacy as social impact factors on engagement behaviours in social media. Second, it makes a contextual contribution by exploring how immediacy is perceived in the context of Fan pages, and by identifying other factors that can moderate the social impact of immediacy on consumer behaviour. Finally, this thesis measures the effects of product involvement, Facebook intensity usage and gender as moderators of social impact in social media settings.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Kathryn Waite for her invaluable feedback and guidance during my initial career as an academic. Her timely support during this journey was a decisive factor to the completion of this thesis. I will always admire her meticulous and systematic approach to conducting academic research. I would also like to thank Prof. Kevin O’Gorman for all his support during this journey, for providing valuable guidance on the practicalities of life as an academic, and for offering a nurturing environment to discuss ideas during the critical parts of this thesis. Thanks are also given to Prof. Mark Davies who gave me useful support during my master degree and first year of my PhD studies.

Special thanks are given to all the participants that kindly agreed to take part in these experiments. It is evident that without you, a key component of this thesis would not be possible.

Thanks are given to staff and fellow PhD students at Heriot Watt University who have helped to make my PhD journey more enjoyable. In particular, I would like to mention Sarah and Isla, with whom I started this adventure four years ago. Thanks as well to Danielle for sharing my enthusiasm with social media. Thanks are also given to Dr. Babak Taheri, Keith and Ross for their advice at conferences.

Thanks and love are given to my parents and my brother for their faith in my ability and to my friends during my time here in Edinburgh: Marek, Xin, Gaby, Carla, Romina and Carlos. Many of you have left already, but the time I shared with you here will always be memorable to me.

Finally, my endless thanks and love to Maud, my wife and rock, for her patience and support during this journey. For all the happiness that she brought and keeps bringing to my life. This thesis reflects the support, guidance and patience of many people. Unfortunately, it is not possible to mention all those concerned by name and I apologise for any offence caused by omission. My final hope is that this thesis does justice to everyone’s invaluable input.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Chapter introduction	1
Section 1: Research background	1
1.2 Online environments and social media	1
1.3 From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0	6
1.4 Contrasting Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.....	8
Section 2: Social media websites	13
1.5 Social media: definitions	13
1.6 Social media and the Web 2.0	13
1.7 Classifying social media websites	16
1.7.1 <i>Classifying social media websites: a technological perspective</i>	16
1.7.2 <i>Classifying social media websites: a sociological perspective</i>	18
1.7.3 <i>Classifying social media websites: a structural perspective</i>	20
1.8 Social media and brand communities	25
1.9 Social media adoption by brands.....	26
1.10 Facebook brand fan pages	27
1.11 Challenges associated with the management of Facebook fan pages	28
1.12 Consumer engagement as a key performance metric in social media.....	29
1.13 Social influence in social media	31
Section 3: Aim and objectives of this research	32
1.14 Thesis structure.....	36
Chapter 2: Social influence	40
2.1 Chapter introduction.....	40
Section 1: Social influence.....	41
2.2 Section introduction	41
2.3 Types of social influence.....	41
2.4 Processes of social influence	43
2.5 Modalities of social influence	44
2.6 Conformity	45
2.6.1 <i>Theories on conformity: the objective consensus approach</i>	47
2.6.2 <i>Theories on conformity: conversion theory</i>	48
2.6.3 <i>Theories on conformity: social influence model</i>	50
2.6.4 <i>Theories on conformity: self-categorisation theory</i>	51

2.6.5 Theories on conformity: social impact theory	52
2.7 Social norms	53
2.8 Compliance.....	54
Section 2: Goals in social influence	56
2.9 Section Introduction	56
2.9.1 Goal of accuracy.....	56
2.9.2 Goal of affiliation.....	57
2.9.3 Goal of self-concept	58
Section 3: Theories of social influence	59
2.10 Level of focus in social influence theories	59
Section 4: Social impact theory.....	61
2.11 Section Introduction	61
2.12 Principles of social impact theory	61
2.13 Principle 1: Definition of social forces.....	62
2.13.1 Strength.....	63
2.13.2 Immediacy.....	66
2.13.3 Number of sources	68
2.14 Principle 2: the psychosocial law in SIT	69
2.15 Principle 3: multiplication vs. division of impact	70
2.16 Dynamic social impact theory	71
2.17 Section conclusion.....	73
Section 5: Immediacy as a determinant of social impact.....	75
2.18 Section introduction	75
2.19 Immediacy, distance and proximity	76
2.20 Immediacy in online environments	79
2.20.1 Physical immediacy in online environments.....	79
2.20.2 Temporal immediacy in online environments.....	80
2.20.3 Social immediacy in online environments	81
2.21 Telepresence	83
2.22 Interactivity	84
2.23 Product involvement and social influence.....	85
2.24 Section conclusion.....	85
Chapter 3: Consumer engagement behaviours.....	87
3.1 Chapter introduction.....	87
Section 1: Engagement.....	87

3.2 Engagement in the wider literature.....	87
3.2.1 <i>Behavioural engagement</i>	90
3.2.2 <i>Emotional engagement</i>	90
3.2.3 <i>Cognitive engagement</i>	91
3.3 A behavioural perspective to consumer engagement	97
Section 2: Consumer engagement and social influence	100
3.4 Social influence as determinant of consumer engagement.....	100
3.5 Consumer engagement behaviours on Facebook	101
3.5.1 <i>Page liking</i>	101
3.5.2 <i>Content liking</i>	103
3.5.3 <i>Content sharing</i>	104
3.5.4 <i>Content commenting</i>	105
Section 3: Research propositions	108
3.6 Formulation of research propositions	108
3.6.1 <i>Physical Immediacy</i>	109
3.6.2 <i>Social immediacy</i>	111
3.6.3 <i>Temporal immediacy</i>	112
3.6.4 <i>Product involvement as moderator</i>	113
3.6.5 <i>Facebook intensity usage as moderator</i>	114
3.7 Chapter conclusion	115
Chapter 4: Research Philosophy	118
4.1 Chapter Introduction.....	118
4.2 On the importance of philosophy in marketing theory.....	118
4.3 Positivism: ontological and epistemological implications	119
4.4 Interpretivism: ontological and epistemological implications	122
4.5 Critical Realism: ontological and epistemological implications	125
4.6 Causal explanation in critical realism	128
4.7 Chapter conclusion	128
Chapter 5: Research Design	130
5.1 Chapter introduction.....	130
5.2 The research phases and their relationship with the aims and objectives	130
Section 1: Research strategy	132
5.3 Exploratory research through focus groups.....	132
5.4 Focus group protocol.....	132
5.5 Causal enquiry and its implications on selection of method	134

5.6 Stages in experimental design	135
5.7 From research propositions to hypotheses formulation	136
5.8 Determination of treatments	136
5.9 Determination of experimental units	139
Section 2: Experimental procedures.....	140
5.10 Section introduction	140
5.11 Experimental procedures: recruitment	140
5.12 Experimental procedures: data collection online vs. paper based.....	140
5.13 Experimental procedures: assignment of participants.....	141
5.14 Ethical considerations for experimentation	142
5.14.1 <i>Avoiding harm</i>	142
5.14.2 <i>Lack of control</i>	143
5.14.3 <i>Participant consent</i>	143
5.14.4 <i>Deception in experiments</i>	144
5.14.5 <i>The use of incentives in experiments</i>	145
Section 3: Research studies.....	146
5.15 Study 1: Physical immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	146
5.16 Experimental design	147
5.17 Independent variable	147
5.18 Dependent variable	152
5.18.1 <i>Consumer engagement behaviours</i>	152
5.18.2 <i>On the use of a single item scale</i>	153
5.19 Moderating and confounding variables	153
5.19.1 <i>Facebook intensity usage</i>	153
5.19.2 <i>Product Involvement</i>	154
5.20 Study 2: Social immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours...	155
5.21 Independent variable	156
5.22 Dependent variable	160
5.23 Moderating / Confounding Variables	160
5.23.1 <i>Intensity of Facebook usage</i>	160
5.23.2 <i>Involvement</i>	161
5.24 Study 3: Temporal immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours	161
5.25 Independent variables	162
5.26 Dependent variable	166
5.27 Moderating/confounding variables.....	166

5.27.1 <i>Intensity of Facebook use</i>	166
5.27.2 <i>Involvement with the category</i>	166
5.28 Chapter conclusion	167
Chapter 6: Findings	169
6.1 Chapter introduction	169
6.2 Exploration of the relationship of Fan page immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	171
6.2.1 <i>Engagement with brands on Facebook</i>	171
6.2.2 <i>Physical immediacy</i>	174
6.2.3 <i>Social immediacy</i>	175
6.2.4 <i>Temporal immediacy</i>	176
6.2.5 <i>Other factors influencing engagement behaviour</i>	177
6.3 Pilot study 1: physical immediacy	179
6.4 Main studies	182
6.4.1 <i>Introduction</i>	182
6.4.2 <i>Data collection</i>	183
6.4.3 <i>Sample characteristics</i>	184
6.5 Study 1: Measuring the effect of physical immediacy	185
6.5.1 <i>Procedures</i>	185
6.5.2 <i>Manipulation checks</i>	186
6.6 Statistical testing: Study 1	187
6.6.1 <i>Physical immediacy and Page Liking</i>	187
6.6.2 <i>Physical immediacy and content liking</i>	188
6.6.3 <i>Physical immediacy and commenting on fan page content</i>	190
6.6.4 <i>Physical immediacy and sharing fan page content</i>	192
6.6.5 <i>Study 1: conclusion</i>	194
6.7 Study 2: Measuring the effect of social immediacy	196
6.7.1 <i>Procedures</i>	196
6.7.2 <i>Manipulation checks</i>	198
6.8 Statistical testing: Study 2	199
6.9 Study 3: Measuring the effects of temporal immediacy	208
6.9.1 <i>Procedures</i>	208
6.9.2 <i>Manipulation checks</i>	209
6.10 Statistical testing: Study 3	210
6.11 Immediacy and gender	220
6.12 Chapter conclusion	222

Chapter 7: Discussion	223
7.1 Chapter Introduction.....	223
Section 1: Immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	224
7.2 The effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in Facebook fan pages.....	224
7.2.1 <i>Physical immediacy in online environments</i>	226
7.2.2 <i>Social immediacy in online environments</i>	229
7.2.3 <i>Temporal immediacy in online environments</i>	231
7.2.4 <i>On the importance of reporting non-significant results</i>	232
7.2.5 <i>Temporal immediacy in online environments</i>	233
Section 2: Moderators of social influence.....	235
7.3 Moderators of social influence effects on consumer engagement behaviours	235
7.3.1 <i>Product involvement and consumer engagement behaviours</i>	235
7.3.2 <i>Facebook intensity usage and consumer engagement behaviours</i>	236
7.4 Gender and consumer engagement behaviours	237
7.5 Social impact theory in social media settings	238
7.6 Chapter conclusion	239
Chapter 8: Conclusion.....	241
8.1 Chapter introduction.....	241
Section 1: Fulfilling the aim.....	241
8.2 Measuring the effects of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media	241
8.3 Reviewing the objectives.....	242
Section 2: Contributions of the research	243
8.4 Theoretical contributions.....	243
8.5 Contextual Contribution	245
Section 3: Limitations and future research.....	247
8.6 Limitations.....	247
8.6.1 <i>External validity limitations: sample bias</i>	247
8.6.2 <i>Predictive validity limitations</i>	247
8.7 Model sufficiency: limitations in the selection of dependent variables	248
8.8 Contextual limitations	248
8.8.1 <i>Limitations based on platform selection: Using Facebook brand fan pages</i>	248
8.8.2 <i>Limitations based on product category selection: beverages and news</i>	249
8.9 Future research	249

8.10 Chapter conclusion	251
List of references	253
Appendices	294

List of tables

Table 1- Frequency of Internet use in the UK (2006 to 2014).....	2
Table 2- Average minutes spent per day with major media channels by US adults (2010-2013)	4
Table 3- A comparison of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.....	7
Table 4- Technological, structural and sociological differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0	9
Table 5- A technological classification of social media websites: openness and connectedness.....	17
Table 6- A sociological classification of social media websites: social presence/ self-presentation	19
Table 7- Top 10 Facebook brand fan pages based on number of fans -2014	27
Table 8- Social influence theories and models	59
Table 9- The principles of social impact theory.....	62
Table 10- Strength in trans-situational conditions	65
Table 11- Strength in situation-specific conditions	66
Table 12- Operationalizing immediacy in SIT.....	67
Table 13- Types of self-organisation according to dynamic social impact theory	73
Table 14- Type of proximities found in literature.....	78
Table 15- The concept of engagement in social sciences	89
Table 16- Behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement in educational psychology literature	91
Table 17- The concept of engagement in marketing and communications literature	95
Table 18- Empirical studies on engagement	98
Table 19- Components and metrics for consumer engagement	99
Table 20- Research phases	117
Table 21- Differences between positivistic/empiricist and interpretivist/constructionist views of science	124
Table 22- The structure of causal explanation: a critical realist approach.....	128
Table 23- Research phases and its relation with research aims and objectives	131
Table 24 Focus group process.....	133
Table 25 Sample characteristics of focus groups.....	134
Table 26- Definition of treatments of studies	137
Table 27- Within subject vs. between subjects	142

Table 28- Measurements of CEBs on Facebook.....	152
Table 29- Intensity of usage of Facebook	154
Table 30- Involvement measurements	155
Table 31- Empirical studies and research propositions.....	169
Table 32- Pilot Study 1 normality test	181
Table 33- Overview of data collected	184
Table 34- Sample characteristics (study 1 - physical immediacy).....	186
Table 35- Statistical testing result summary	195
Table 36- Sample characteristics (study 2 - social immediacy).....	198
Table 37- Statistical testing result summary	207
Table 38- Sample characteristics (study 3 - temporal immediacy).....	209
Table 39- Statistical testing result summary	219
Table 40- Gender and intended engagement behaviours	221
Table 41- Results from experiments measuring the effect of immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours	222
Table 42- Results from experiments measuring the effect of immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours	225
Table 43 Engagement behaviours moderated by product involvement	235
Table 44 Engagement behaviours moderated by Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU).....	236
Table 45- Future research avenues.....	250

List of figures

Figure 1- Average minutes spent per day with major media channels by US adults (2010-2013).....	3
Figure 2- Digital platforms that US Internet users have used to communicate with others - May 2013	12
Figure 3- Social media use by age group over time	15
Figure 4- A structural classification of social media websites: the honeycomb of social media	20
Figure 5- Contrasting functionalities in social media sites	22
Figure 6- Facebook monthly users	25
Figure 7- Metrics used to measure engagement by marketing practitioners (2013).....	30
Figure 8- Number of publications related to "social media" and "social influence"	31
Figure 9- Thesis structure.....	36
Figure 10- Studies on conformity	46
Figure 11- Schematic representation of conversion theory.....	48
Figure 12- Principle 1: Social forces.....	63
Figure 13- Representing the psychosocial law: logarithmic vs. linear models.....	70
Figure 14- Example of "Page liking" behaviour	103
Figure 15- Example of "content liking" behaviour	104
Figure 16- Example of "content sharing" behaviour.....	105
Figure 17- Example of "content commenting" behaviour	106
Figure 18- The impact of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours (CEBs) ..	108
Figure 19- Research propositions and relationships between immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	115
Figure 20- The falsification model of scientific method.....	122
Figure 21- Stages in experimental design and analysis	135
Figure 22- Physical immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	146
Figure 23- Geographically segmented online presence	148
Figure 24- Study 1: high physical immediacy condition	149
Figure 25- Study 1: low physical immediacy condition	150
Figure 26- Study 1: control condition	151
Figure 27- Social immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours	155
Figure 28- Study 2: high social immediacy condition	157
Figure 29- Study 2: low social immediacy condition	158

Figure 30- Study 2: control condition	159
Figure 31- Temporal immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours	161
Figure 32- Study 3: high temporal immediacy	163
Figure 33- Study 3: low temporal immediacy.....	164
Figure 34- Study 3: high temporal immediacy	165
Figure 35- Physical immediacy and engagement behaviours	185
Figure 36- Physical immediacy and page liking	187
Figure 37- Physical immediacy and page liking (ANCOVA)	188
Figure 38- Physical immediacy and content liking.....	189
Figure 39- Physical immediacy and content liking (ANCOVA)	190
Figure 40- Physical immediacy and content commenting	191
Figure 41- Physical immediacy and content commenting (ANCOVA)	192
Figure 42- Physical immediacy and content sharing	193
Figure 43- Physical immediacy and content sharing (ANCOVA).....	194
Figure 44- Social immediacy and engagement behaviours.....	197
Figure 45- Social immediacy and page liking.....	199
Figure 46- Social immediacy and page liking (ANCOVA).....	200
Figure 47- Social Immediacy and liking content	201
Figure 48- Social Immediacy and liking content (ANCOVA)	202
Figure 49- Social immediacy and commenting on content.....	203
Figure 50- Social immediacy and commenting on content (ANCOVA).....	204
Figure 51- Social immediacy and sharing content	205
Figure 52- Social immediacy and sharing content (ANCOVA)	205
Figure 53- Temporal immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviour	208
Figure 54- Temporal Immediacy and Page liking.....	211
Figure 55- Temporal Immediacy and Page liking (ANCOVA).....	212
Figure 56- Temporal immediacy and content liking.....	213
Figure 57- Temporal immediacy and content liking (ANCOVA)	214
Figure 58- Temporal immediacy and content commenting	215
Figure 59- Temporal immediacy and content commenting (ANCOVA)	216
Figure 60- Temporal immediacy and content sharing	217
Figure 61- Temporal immediacy and content sharing (ANCOVA).....	218
Figure 62- Social influence model on engagement behaviours	223

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Chapter introduction

This thesis applies social impact theory (Latané, 1981) to examine how, in an online context, consumer engagement with brands is related to social influence. The aim of the research is to explore the effect of three forms of immediacy: social, temporal and physical on consumer engagement with brands on Facebook. This introductory chapter has three objectives. First to inform on the background to the thesis, second to detail the scope and focus of the research and third to provide an overview of the thesis structure. This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. The chapter starts with an overview of the research background, and focuses on the importance of maintaining the development of research in online settings, with a focus on the evolution from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 which underpinned the creation of social media, which is the context of this dissertation. The chapter introduces the concept of brand communities in social media, and provides evidence of their increasing encouragement by businesses and discusses the challenges that these environments pose to marketing academics and practitioners. The aims and objectives of this research are then presented. Finally, this chapter ends with an overview of the nine chapters that comprise this thesis.

Section 1: Research background

1.2 Online environments and social media

The context of this research is social media websites, a type of online environment that is increasingly used by Internet users and companies (Barnes, Lescault, & Wright, 2013); and that has been progressively studied, since its appearance, in marketing and other social sciences. The use of social media has recently reached 74% among Internet users, according to a study (Pew Research Center, 2014b). These users are also relying more on these media as source of information, allowing them to get access to a wider range of sources (ranging from official websites to access to consumer-generated experiences in the forms of product reviews or comments) and affecting consumption behaviour (Laing, Newholm, & Hogg, 2009). There is also empowerment of users of social media, as they become not only consumers but also producers of content (Konczal, 2008). This transition

from consumers to *prosumers* in online settings (a term introduced by Toffler in 1980 to describe proactive consumers), is underpinned by the changes that the Web has experienced in the latest decade as the transformation from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 occurred (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This is making consumers become more active when online, as they spend more time in these settings and engage at different levels with the brands and companies that they buy from (Solis, 2010; David, 2001).

The growth in social media use is underpinned by the growth in the number of people accessing the Internet more frequently and in mobile settings. Online environments are rapidly becoming an important means of communication, as well as a source of information, and their pervasiveness of use within the UK population, where 76% of Internet users in this country logged in on a daily basis in 2014 means that more people are interacting with each other and with brands in these settings. Table 1 presents an 8 year account of these changes. Time spent on social networking sites already accounts for the largest share of online activities (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2014) In addition, this trend appears to be continuing with more users connecting daily as the percentage of occasional/non-users continues to diminish.

Table 1- Frequency of Internet use in the UK (2006 to 2014)

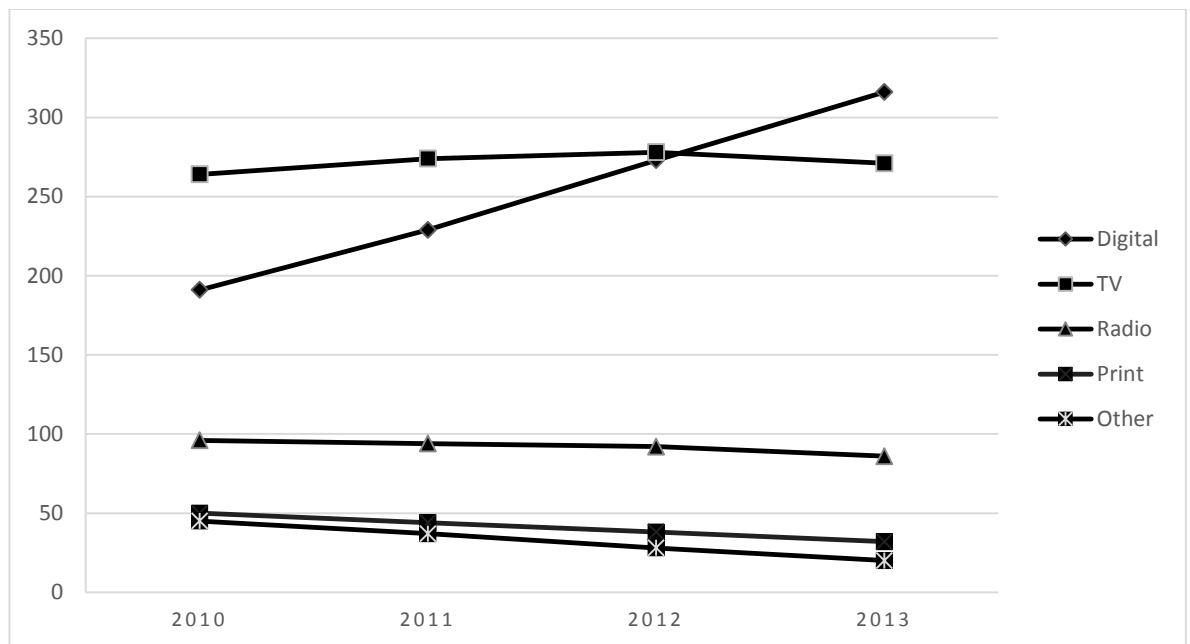
Year	Used within the last three months						Did not use the Internet in the last three months	
	Daily		At least weekly		Less than weekly			
	Adults (Millions)	%	Adults (Millions)	%	Adults (Millions)	%	Adults (Millions)	%
2006	16.2	35	7.4	16	3.7	8	18.5	40
2007	20.7	45	7.3	16	3.0	6	15.3	33
2008	23.0	49	7.2	15	2.8	6	13.5	29
2009	26.6	55	7.3	15	2.5	5	11.6	24
2010	29.2	60	6.3	13	1.7	3	11.1	23
2011	31.4	64	5.2	11	2.2	5	9.8	20
2012	33.2	68	5.3	11	1.5	3	8.8	18
2013	35.7	73	4.2	9	1.6	3	7.4	15
2014	37.6	76	4.1	8	1.2	2	6.5	13

Source: (Office for National Statistics, 2014)

Since the year 2000, the way users interact on the Internet and use it as a source of information has rapidly changed and has become more interactive in nature as social

media websites and Web 2.0 changed the online landscape (OReilly, 2007, p. 0). Users are spending more hours of their time online, searching and socialising with their peers. Further support of this observation is in a study by eMarketer (eMarketer, 2013b) that found that, in the US, digital media are overtaking other, traditional channels in terms of time spent on them. While time spent on TV, Radio and printed media has remained steady from 2010 to 2013, time spent on digital media has consistently increased during the same period of time. In fact, it had the same levels as TV in 2012, and by 2013 digital media surpassed TV and became the dominant media in the sample collected in this study, as shown in Figure 1. In the same Figure declining trends for print media and radio are also evident, which further suggests that media consumption is going to digital channels.

Figure 1- Average minutes spent per day with major media channels by US adults (2010-2013)



Source: (eMarketer, 2013b)

**Table 2- Average minutes spent per day with major media channels by US adults
(2010-2013)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Digital	191	229	273	316
Online	142	153	147	139
Mobile	24	48	95	141
Other	26	28	31	36
TV	264	274	278	271
Radio	96	94	92	86
Print	50	44	38	32
Newspaper:	30	26	22	18
Magazines	20	18	16	14
Other	45	37	28	20
Total	646	678	709	725

Source: (eMarketer, 2013b)

Within digital sources, the effect of the availability of Internet access through mobile devices is more evident. The same study found that Internet access through mobile devices had a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 80%, while Internet access through desktops (named “online” in Table 2 above) has been decreasing in the same period (CAGR -1%). Although these results are only representative of the US, they give an indication of how other regions in the world will become once use of both Internet and mobile technologies reaches the level of that in the United States. As more time is spent online, more interactions are occurring in this environment and individuals rely more on the Internet and social media as sources of information (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). In fact, the Internet is becoming the number one source of information at work and the second one at home (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), and a recent study of Internet users in the UK found that 90% of them frequently use it to search for information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Mintel, 2012; Rosenstiel, Mitchell, Purcell, & Rainie, 2011).

Thus the Internet is becoming a very important source of information, and that the way it is used is also changing towards access from portable devices. However change is not limited to how people access online environments, but there has also been an evolution within the Web itself and an emerging type of website that is facilitating behaviours that

are not only focused on consumption of content, but allowing different forms of socialisation and co-creation in these environments.

Over the last decade many researchers have acknowledged that the traditional boundaries between producers and consumers has become blurred and distorted as consumers assume increasingly active roles in the marketing process (Cova & Dalli, 2009; J. Kim & Hardin, 2010; Konczal, 2008). It is generally agreed that one of the main factors influencing this change is technological advancement (Christodoulides, 2009; Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Jeong & Mindy Jeon, 2008; Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). In particular, some of the main technological drivers cited include the Internet (Akar & Topçu, 2011; Dhar & Chang, 2009) and Web 2.0 technologies (Burmman, 2010; Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008; Hardey, 2011). The other main influential factors are social functions which include the increase in consumers' desire to be interactive (Daugherty et al., 2008), to actively engage in their online consumer experience (Mollen & Wilson, 2010) and the resistance to oppressive marketing controls (Cova and Dalli, 2009). The convergence of these technological and social factors over the last decade has resulted in the emergence of a consumer marketing catalyst in the form of the use of social media (Qualman, 2012; A. N. Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012; O'Connor, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), which has shifted the boundaries of both marketing and consumer behaviour (Hardey, 2011). It is this innovation in social communication and social production and the rise in consumer participation in the marketing process facilitated by these developments that has led to an era of “co-creational marketing” and “social influence marketing” (Gamble & Gilmore, 2013; Y.-M. Li, Lee, & Lien, 2012a).

From a co-creational perspective, this new level of interaction between customers and firms has also been reflected in advancements in marketing theory. The service dominant (S-D) logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) argues for the repositioning of the customer from a passive entity of consumption of products and services to a more active player in the co-creation of value before, during and after consumption. Social media websites can make economic-exchange relations more collaborative and social, positively impacting financial outcomes as well (Piller, Vossen, & Ihl, 2012). Although there is an increasing body of literature that expands on the benefits of co-creation (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2011; Gamble & Gilmore, 2013;

Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Prahalad, 2004), this remains outside the scope of this research. However this thesis will acknowledge its existence within the marketing literature. The focus in this thesis is in the second theme emerging from these changes, that of social influence marketing.

Social influence marketing employs social media and social influencers to achieve marketing and business goals (Li et al., 2012; Schaefer, 2012; Singh, 2009). This marketing technique leverages from the fact that, as potential customers make a purchasing decision, they are being influenced by various forces (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). Influential forces can be people who have a strong social influence towards a target; however, recent findings in the context of social media have also found that influence can come from mere virtual presence (Naylor et al., 2012). Social influence can change users' thoughts and actions and the extent to which these forces affect consumer behaviour online is still an understudied area. This thesis examines consumer interactions within social media using the lens of social influence.

The following section further examines the main technological drivers of the internet and Web 2.0 technologies as it is in this environment that the context of this research takes place.

1.3 From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0

This section introduces the concepts of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 to account for the evolution of the Internet, as a means of communication, within the last two decades. It starts by defining Web 1.0 and its characteristics and then contrasting them with those of Web 2.0. Some examples of both types of websites are provided. The section is then followed by a more in-depth discussion of social media websites.

Web 1.0 is a term used to represent the first generation of websites available for general use, and the main characteristic of Web 1.0 was the uni-directionality of the interactions

that occurred in them (Berners-Lee & Fischetti, 2000). Some of the main characteristics of Web 1.0 sites are summarised in Table 3. One of the key characteristics of Web 1.0 is that sites only allowed their users to read the content generated by that website, which also meant that the levels of interactions that a user could have with that particular website were limited to mostly passive behaviours. Web 1.0 was a place to broadcast information to the masses, in a similar way to other traditional media such as TV, radio or newspapers. The flow of communication was one-to-many, and due to the technical knowledge needed to create a website, it was a medium that was only accessible for those that knew how to code or had access to the means to code (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh, & Farsani, 2012). This meant that the focus of Web 1.0 was on companies that had access to these technologies and that could pay to develop their own website and control the content that was available there. This also meant that control over what was said on these platforms was mainly exercised by the platform-owner, and there were no mechanisms that allowed the large scale sharing of content.

Table 3- A comparison of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Reading-only	Reading/Writing
Companies	Communities
Client-server	Peer to peer
Html, portals	XML, RSS
Taxonomy	Tags
Owning	Sharing
Ipos	Trade Sales
Netscape	Google
Web form	Web applications
Screen scraping	APIs
Dialup	Broadband
Hardware cost	Bandwidth cost
Lectures	Conversation
Advertising	Word-of-mouth
Services sold over the web	Web services
Information portals	Platforms

Source: (Aghaei et al., 2012)

Web 2.0 is a term used to describe both the new generation of websites and a newly conveyed philosophy of this environment. The concept is defined by the creator of the Web as “read-write” platforms that introduced capabilities to the Web that went beyond read-only content, allowing users to also contribute by creating content and interacting with other Web users (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Solis (2010), the term was first used in 2003 by Tim O’Reilly to describe a new way to use the Internet. Web 2.0 represents a shift from Web 1.0 sites, where content could be created by only one source and then displayed to one or many to websites where content could be continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner. It represents not only a change in the configuration of the Internet and the ways in which sites work, but also a change on the way users interact, no longer viewing the content of others in a one or two step model of flow of information, but instead collaborating and generating content together. One of the most evident examples of Web 2.0 is Wikipedia, a site inspired by the collaboration of thousands of contributors to generate one of the largest and most visited encyclopaedias of all times with over 26 million articles in 285 languages written by 39 million registered users (Wikipedia, 2013). Hence Web 2.0 is an environment that is characterised by opportunities for interaction and it is precisely the interactive behaviours that are possible in Web 2.0 that are the focus of this thesis.

1.4 Contrasting Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Now the key characteristics of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 have been defined and described, this subsection contrasts these elements to provide guidance on which dimensions will be relevant for this research. Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) posit that there are three main aspects that separate Web 1.0 from Web 2.0: technological, structural and sociological (Table 4).

Table 4- Technological, structural and sociological differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

	Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Technological	HTML, Portals Screen scraping	XML, RSS APIs
Structural	Client-server Taxonomy Transactional	Peer to peer Tags Communication
Sociological	Owning Companies Lectures Advertising	Sharing Communities Conversation Word-of-mouth

Adapted from (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008)

The technological aspects relate to the scripting and presentation technologies used to develop the site and allow users to interact. Examples of technology-related characteristics are the coding languages used to develop the sites. While Web 1.0 used less dynamic languages such as HTML, Web 2.0 is characterised by the use of languages that are simpler and in formats that are both human and computer readable, such as XML. From a technological perspective, Web 1.0 was therefore mostly under the control of the owner of the code and there was no flexibility for users to create new applications for it. A key characteristic of many Web 2.0 sites is that they also give access to other developers to part of their code, in the form of API (Application Programming Interfaces), allowing these elements to be integrated into the generation of new web applications. An example of this would be Facebook, a popular social networking site that allows developers and users to add functionalities (e.g. log in, social boxes) into third party websites in order to enhance the experience of their users.

The structural aspects relate to the purpose, functionality and layout of the site. Websites from the Web 1.0 era typically adopted a hierarchical structure, having a front page displaying all the different sub-pages within the site that could be navigated via hyperlinks and a search function. Many corporate sites and SMEs websites still follow this Web 1.0 approach, which is characterised by being more static (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Web 1.0 serves as a transactional medium, where returns are obtained through the

efficiency and effectiveness of online retailing. Performance indicators of Web 1.0 sites are measured in terms of revenue, number of customers and number of visitors to the site (Mistry, 2011).

Web 2.0 sites, on the other hand, resemble real-world social networks, displaying different structures to reflect the implicit bi-directionality of the interactions that can occur within them. Content needs to be displayed dynamically, meaning that, even within a somewhat rigid structure, the content displayed varies depending on the users and their level of activity. Building on the example from the social networking site Facebook, content is changed dynamically by the user and his connected network via algorithms (known as EdgeRank) that weights the type of content, the immediacy of that content and the affinity between the content originator (source) and the user (target) (Edgerank, 2014). This means that content will not only change each time a user logs into a website, but also that the content displayed will take into account dynamic elements (e.g. the type of relationship existing between users, previous interactions with similar content and time decay of that content) in order to provide more relevant content with which the user is more likely to interact.

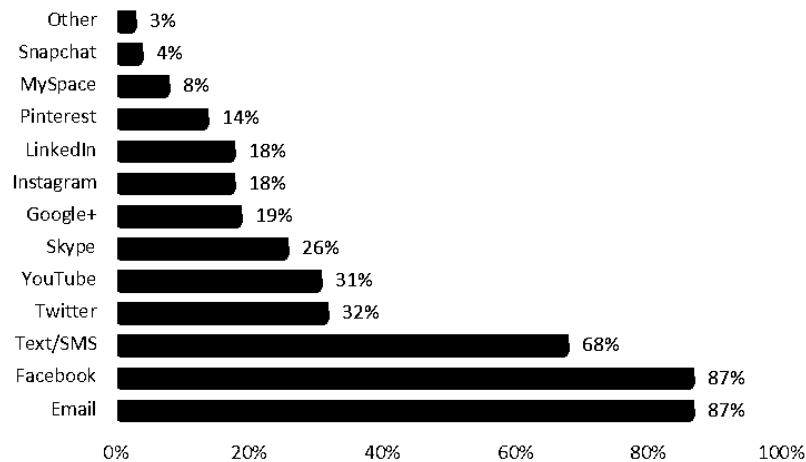
Web 2.0 is therefore focused on being a communication medium, in principle, as opposed to a transactional one like Web 1.0, thus priming interactions between consumers and consumers and organisations. This reflects on the performance indicators used by practitioners and academics for Web 2.0 sites, where the top performance indicators are no longer in terms of visits and revenue, but in terms of consumer engagement, interaction rates and reach of influencers (eMarketer, 2014a; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). On this matter, Kim et al. (W. Kim, Jeong, & Lee, 2010) posit that essential features of Web 2.0 sites are the ability to (1) have personal profiles, (2) be able to establish online connections and (3) participate in online groups by (4) communicating with those connections, (5) sharing user-generated content, and (6) expressing opinions, as well as (7) being able to find information when needed and (8) develop mechanisms that make users stay longer, come back frequently and entice socialisation. Consequently the structure of a Web 2.0 site is communication-driven as opposed to transaction-driven.

The sociological aspects in these environments relate to notions of friends and groups. The technological and structural capabilities of Web 1.0 sites affected the type of interactions that could occur in those environments, hence the sociological axis reflects these limitations. Web 1.0 sites were focused on the companies, and the content that they decided to upload and make accessible for the users. Ownership of the content was for the company only and focused on advertising the product. In contrast with this, the sociological changes brought about in Web 2.0 are oriented towards sharing content and building communities. The ability to engage in conversation and interrelate with the content (sharing it, liking it, commenting on it) lead to a higher level of interaction and the medium has become more social (E. Bakshy, Hofman, Mason, & Watts, 2011, p. 0).

Despite all this, it is hard to categorise sites in a binary manner between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0; the changes that can be achieved at technological and interactional levels have been gradually leading to modification of many websites (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). For example, news sites were initially places for consumption of information only, and followed a one-to-many communication process. Nowadays, news sites still display one-to-many communication but also allow users to express their opinions via comments, or to share that information with other friends via social networking sites.

Sites with Web 2.0 capabilities are increasing on the Internet, as many of these sites have integrated elements that upgraded their Web 1.0 sites in order to encourage their users to spend more time with them. A study looking at the code of the top 10,000 sites of the Internet found that 24.3% of them had some form of Facebook integration on them (Royal Pingdom, 2012). Web 2.0 sites are also becoming increasingly popular with Internet users as a communication medium and not only for content consumption. For instance, Figure 2 shows the results of a survey that aimed to see which digital platforms were used by US internet users to communicate with each other. From the results, of the 12 platforms that were mentioned by the users, 9 were sites with Web 2.0 capabilities, and the social networking site Facebook had the same level of incidence of use as other popular online forms of communication such as email, and higher incidence than text messages.

Figure 2- Digital platforms that US Internet users have used to communicate with others - May 2013



Source: (eMarketer, 2013d)

The use of social media platforms as a communication channel is reflected in the statistics that show that the number of social media users in the UK has been increasing steadily and is predicted to reach 52.6% of the UK population this year (eMarketer, 2013). In fact, research conducted by YouGov's Media consulting team found that almost two thirds (65%) of the UK online population have used Facebook at least once a month (YouGov, 2012). In this new environment, users have the control to generate content by themselves taking them from a passive role into a more engaging environment. In particular, the presence of social media has given consumers an active role in shaping the products that they consume and expressing and sharing with others their views on those products. For this reason, within the changes experienced through the Internet and the Web 2.0 have, social media websites play a very important role. This thesis focuses upon sociological aspects of website use as being an emergent phenomenon within Internet communication technology by individuals.

The next section in this chapter examines social media websites in more detail, starting by providing a definition and its link to the impact that Web 2.0 had on the Internet. Several frameworks used in the literature to classify social media websites are also examined and applied to different sites that fall into this category. Finally, the impact that these sites are having on business are also discussed.

Section 2: Social media websites

1.5 Social media: definitions

A social media website is a form of “consumer-generated media” which is defined as a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Underpinned by the technological advancements of Web 2.0 that were discussed in the previous section, new communication channels have been made available to consumers. Web 2.0 does not require advanced technical knowledge in order to allow users produce their own content or consume that of their peers.

Within marketing, one of the earliest definitions for social media that encompasses these changes is provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). They define social media websites as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. This view is also shared in other fields outside marketing. For instance, within information systems research, Kim et al. (W. Kim et al., 2010) define social media websites as those sites that ‘that make it possible for people to form online *communities*, and *share user-created contents (UCCs)*’ (W. Kim et al., 2010). Both definitions summarise the three main characteristics that websites of this type need to have in order to be considered social: (1) they enable user-created content (UCC, also referred as User Generated Content or UGC), (2) they allow the possibility to form online communities through which this content can be passed on and finally (3) that all these interactions occur in an online environment, mediated by the Internet, in particular Web 2.0. The following section further explores the predominance of social media websites and the concept of Web 2.0.

1.6 Social media and the Web 2.0

In Section 1.3, Web 2.0 was identified as a concept reflecting the set of changes undergone by the Internet technologically, financially and philosophically, after the dot-

com financial crash in early 2000s. In a broad way, Web 2.0 is a set of principles and practices of the post-crash web. To summarise these principles, Web 2.0 sites would represent the Web not as packaged software (e.g. Netscape, double click, Britannica Online) but rather as a platform to provide Web services (e.g. Flickr, Bit Torrent, Wikipedia, and Spotify). In addition, the philosophy of Web 2.0 would not see the Web as a place for consumption of content, but as place for co-development of content and user experience, harnessing the power of collective intelligence to provide an enhanced experience (Murugesan, 2007, p. 0). All this enriched user experience has also generated the development of lighter interfaces and new business models (e.g. freemium, a model that allows users to try the service for free and then pay for extra features; or Long-tail businesses that satisfy very specific need of niche markets). New business models and websites that can provide more targeted products and services to consumers are also increasing the levels of satisfaction, interaction and participation between consumers and brands (Wellman et al., 2001).

Another important element of Web 2.0 is that it enables people to collaborate by displaying their information and voluntarily exchanging details with others in online environments such as in blogs, podcasts, virtual worlds (e.g. Second Life) and social networking sites such as Facebook (Dennis, Merrilees, Jayawardhena, & Wright, 2009). Some owners of sites such as Facebook have recognised the potential of members as customers, and have added commercial advertising on their sites.

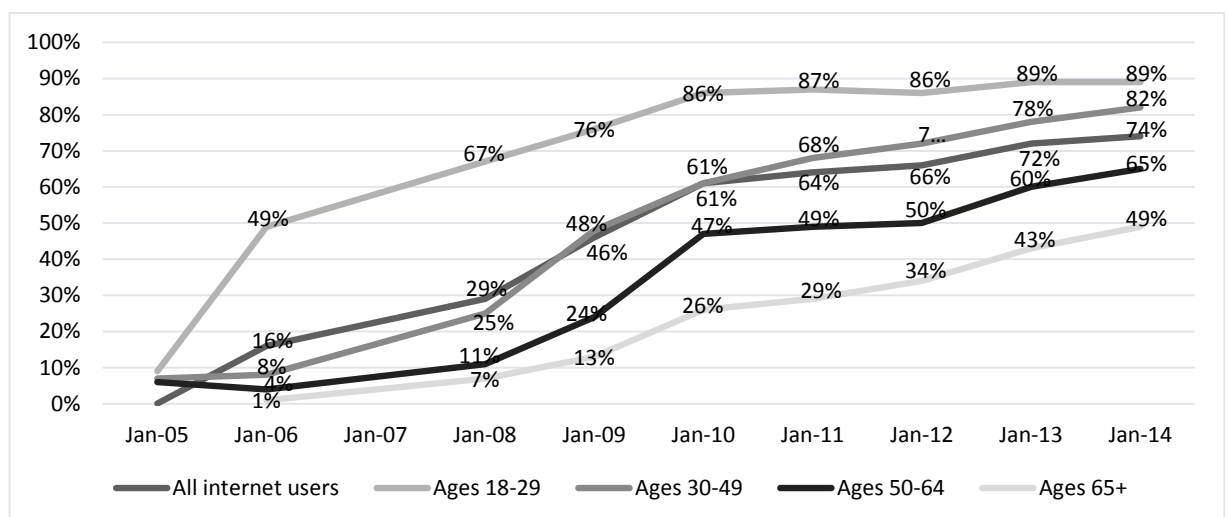
Typically, the growth of personal information gathered through websites and other internet sources is encouraging the spread of viral marketing (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). Film clips, videos, games and jokes can also be forwarded electronically from recipient to recipient in an infectious form of discussion or chat termed “viral marketing”. Overall, Web 2.0 capabilities have enabled websites to become more interactive, facilitating collaborative content creation, allowing content to be shared and modified, as well as encouraging more dynamic web design and updates (Murugesan, 2007; O’Reilly, 2007).

Conceptually, social media websites and Web 2.0 are related to each other. The changes discussed in section 1.4 facilitated the appearance of social media websites, and many of

the structural and social dimensions of Web 2.0 allow for the co-creation and interactions characteristic of these websites. However, social media websites are also facilitating the generation of social influence forces with each of these interactions through rating systems assigned to different sites, as well as the ability to show support and comment on sections in news articles and sites.

Despite the increasing adoption of social media by users of all age ranges (Figure 3), applications for organisational purposes, including marketing and knowledge management, are still at an early stage (Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014). Although only 18 percent of managers believe that use of social media is important for their business today, more than 63 percent assert these media will be important for business within three years (Kiron, Palmer, Phillips, & Kruschwitz, 2012). McKinsey estimates that the economic impact of social media on business could exceed \$1 trillion, most of which is gained from more efficient communication and collaboration within and across organizations but also from an increase in customer engagement and marketing activities through these communication channels (Chui et al. 2012). The impact of social media on and for organisations, therefore, represents an important area of research for management and in particular in marketing.

Figure 3- Social media use by age group over time



Source: (Wormald, 2013)

The next section will provide a framework to classify distinct types of social media websites, based on the literature. A selection of social media websites will be evaluated under the criteria outlined in these frameworks in order to describe a platform that contains the majority of the elements and characteristics that need to be found in social media websites.

1.7 Classifying social media websites

The available literature on how social media websites are classified is limited. This section revises three models that classify social media websites found in the literature. Based on a comparison of other social media sites in these models, this thesis argues for the prominence of Facebook as an ideal context in this study. The selection of these models was based on the three main aspects of differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 proposed by Cormode and Krishnamurthy (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008, p. 0) relating to the technological, sociological and structural levels.

1.7.1 Classifying social media websites: a technological perspective

From a technological perspective, Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) argue that the coding languages and other technology-related elements (e.g. APIs, open sources) are the main distinction between Web 1.0 and 2.0. Under the same premise, Kim et al. (W. Kim et al., 2010) provide a classification of social media websites based on their openness and connectedness to other websites. The application of this classification model to a selection of social media websites is presented in Table 5. Open social media websites are those that publish an open API, allowing access to their software to third-party application developers. Examples of sites within this classification would be My Space, Facebook, Flickr or Twitter.

Table 5- A technological classification of social media websites: openness and connectedness

	Low openness	High openness
High connectedness	LinkedIn	Facebook Google+ Twitter
Low connectedness	Snapchat Yo! Instagram Second Life Blogs	My Space Flickr YouTube

Adapted from: (W. Kim et al., 2010)

The second technological dimension present in Kim et al.'s (2010) model is the degree of connectedness to other sites. Some social media websites allow third party developers to develop applications on platforms that make use of their database, and this Kim et al. (2010) define as the degree of connectedness of the site. Examples of this are the Facebook Connect (C. Li, 2008) and Google Friend Connect features (Google, 2008). Both examples make it possible for a member of one social website (e.g. Facebook) to connect to another website (e.g. Monster, LinkedIn) using the same sign-in credential and sharing member data across both sites. However, not all social media sites are high in openness and connectedness, in particular when they are focused towards the mobile application market. New mobile-only applications such as Snapchat or Yo! allow their users to co-create and share content with others; however they rank low in the two dimensions proposed by Kim et al. (2010).

An evident limitation of a technological classification of social media websites for a marketing-related enquiry is that it fails to encapsulate in detail those features which can affect the level of interaction and other engagement behaviours that occur on the platform. However, some expectations can be derived from this classification for a particular platform. For instance, a platform that ranks high in both openness and connectedness would be likely to be a platform with a large number of users, as the benefits associated to these features (e.g. being able to log in to other websites, allow developers manipulate

the app to integrate it into third party websites and applications) make it more valuable for the end-user. As a consequence, and strongly linked to the number of users that Facebook has, 250 million users have connected via Facebook to third party websites via Facebook Connect (Beard, 2010).

1.7.2 Classifying social media websites: a sociological perspective

A way to classify social media websites is from a sociological perspective, Kaplan and Haenlein (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) proposed a model that takes into account the level of self-presentation / self-disclosure and social presence / media richness. In regards to self-presentation, Goffman (Goffman, 1990) posits that any type of social interaction is accompanied by a desire to control the impressions of an agent received by other people. The underpinning motivation is to influence others and thus to gain rewards through a positive impression, as well as the wish to create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity. This needs appeared to translate into the online environment, where users create, build and control their online presence with the goal of self-presenting themselves in this environment (H. Schau & Gilly, 2003; H. Miller, 1995).

The former dimension, relating to social presence and media richness, takes into account the degree of intimacy and immediacy of the platform. Social presence is defined by Social Presence Theory as the acoustic, visual, and physical contact that can be achieved between two communication partners (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). Under this classification framework, sites such a Facebook can be categorised as medium in terms of media richness and social presence, in the sense that media richness on this platform is limited to text, images and video, with different levels of synchronicity for each of the different types of communication. Yet these sites would be ranked as high on self-presentation: as previous studies have found this particular platform is used to positively self-represent with an online social network (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Brandtzæg, Lüders, & Skjetne, 2010).

Table 6- A sociological classification of social media websites: social presence/ self-presentation

		Social presence / Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social	Virtual social
			Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook)	worlds (e.g. Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative	Content	Virtual world
		Project (e.g. Wikipedia)	communities (e.g. YouTube)	games (e.g. world of Warcraft)

Adapted from: (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Under this classification, the social networking site Facebook does not rank at the highest level of social presence/ media richness and self-presentation/ self-disclosure. Virtual worlds (both social and games based) allow for higher levels in axes measuring both sociological factors and media richness. There, however, are some limitations in the model suggested by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the first one being that it assumes that categories of social media (e.g. social networking sites, collaborative projects, etc.) all have the same levels of self-presentation/self-disclosure and social presence/media richness. However, within social networking sites in particular, these parameters vary widely, and whereas sites like Facebook are indeed high in self/disclosure, there are also other social networking sites such as Snapchat or Yo! where the people interacting do not necessarily disclose personal information.

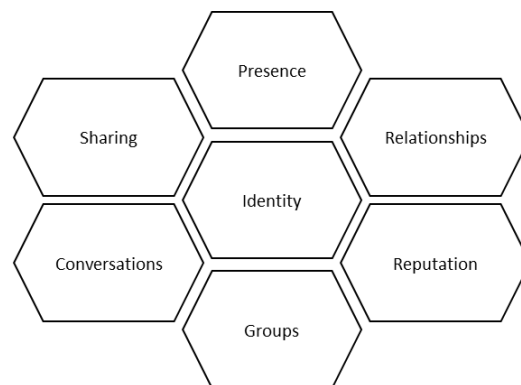
Another limitation is that model assumes that media richness equals social presence. Literature concerning this matter suggests that vividness (i.e. level of media richness) can be an antecedent of telepresence (Fortin & Dholakia, 2005; Hyun & O’Keefe, 2012); however this classification disregards recent empirical studies that show that mere virtual presence in a low media richness environment can also lead to similar outcomes (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012; Argo, Dahl, & Manchanda, 2005). Aside from these limitations, within the constraints of the classification models, the use of Facebook leads

to a platform that ranks medium in media/richness and social presence, and high in self-disclosure/self-presentation. There is also the advantage of using a social media platform like Facebook, as discussed in section 1.2, is increasingly being used by Internet users and businesses for marketing purpose. That is why Facebook has been selected as an appropriate social media platform in this research.

1.7.3 Classifying social media websites: a structural perspective

Finally from a structural perspective, the work introduced by Kietzmann et al. (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011) focuses on the functionality elements of each the social websites. After analysing the existing ways social media can be classified, they devised a seven elements honeycomb based on the distinct functionalities that social media websites could have; these functionalities are: identity, presence, relationships, reputation, groups, conversation and sharing.

Figure 4- A structural classification of social media websites: the honeycomb of social media



Source: Kietzmann et al. (2011)

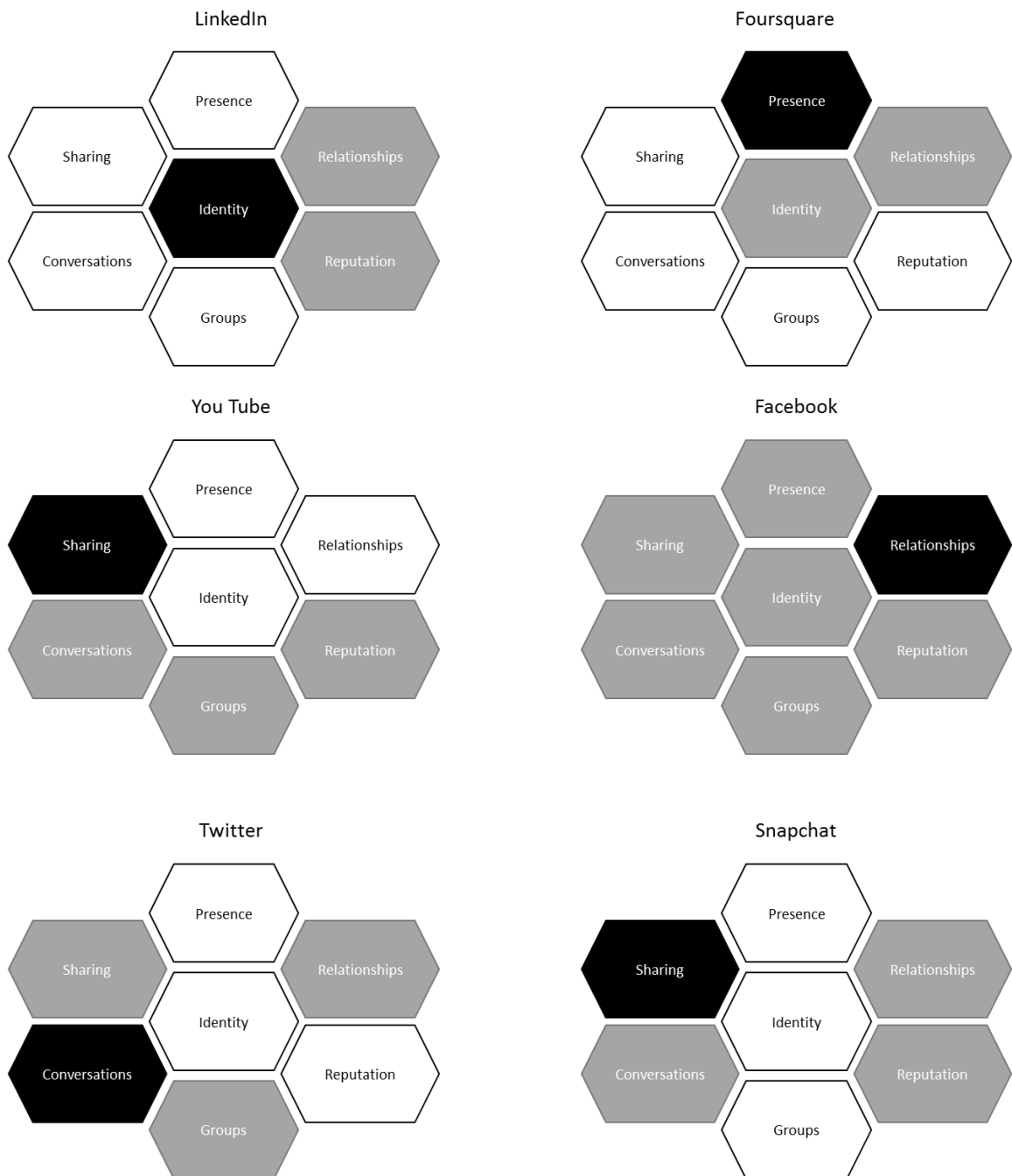
From their perspective, each of these elements is considered to vary across social media websites and they serve as points of differentiation among the sites. Figure 5 provides some examples of how this framework based on functionality of the social media site can be used to contrast and classify different sites. Dark boxes indicate the functionalities that

are central to that social media site, while the boxes tinted grey represent functionalities that are tangential to the platform.

In the case of *identity*, this is a variable that relates to how much the users interacting on these sites reveal their real identities to other users. In this regard, many of the social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Hi5, and LinkedIn) rely on the disclosure of real identity in order to draw social networks among their users and suggest further connections. These social media websites are thus dependent on real identities being disclosed by users in order to provide a useful and meaningful service. Other types of social media sites rely less on this functionality, and the identity of the member of the community is not relevant at all. An example of this type of site could be virtual world websites such as Second Life or bookmarking sites such as *Digg*, or micro blogging sites such as Twitter, where real identities are not a central pillar on which interaction between users is mediated. Instead, it is the contribution of the users that counts in this type of site.

Strongly related to identity is the functionality that allows users to keep track of the *relationships* being established with other users on the site. The configuration of the site may require that a relationship exists between users in order to allow interaction (as is the case of Facebook, or LinkedIn), whilst others might just allow users without a relationship to interact (as is the case of reviewing and rating sites or discussion boards). Also related to identity and relationships is the ability to form communities within the site. Certain sites will promote the generation of *groups*, and even when the relationship between its members is not formally established as a social connection, grouping can still exist among users with similar interests but no formal connection between them. This is the case of forums and discussion boards, or groups within social networking sites such as Facebook, where communities can be formed even if identity and relationships are not formally established.

Figure 5- Contrasting functionalities in social media sites



Adapted from Kietzmann et al. (2011)

Reputation is another functionality that can be made available on social media websites. On social media sites reputation tends to be generated by aggregating user-generated information to assess trustworthiness of the user. For instance, in review and rating sites, reputation may be determined by the number of ratings that the user has already been given, or the number of views that previous posts have had. Although ways of assigning

reputation may vary from site to site, the information being displayed from the source of that recommendation will give social cues that will allow the target to better evaluate that comment. The amount of information being displayed is usually a decision made by the site owners, although consumers are increasingly requesting that some control is given back to them as concerns grow about online privacy (Sheehan, 2002; Vogelsang & Compaine, 2000). Reputation can also be actively constructed by the user in social networking sites, by choosing what type of content to post or share, and by participating in specialised online communities on sections of Facebook (Boyd & Hargittai, 2010; Dellarocas, 2000).

Presence as a distinguishing element of functionality in social media websites relates to the degree the real presence of the individual behind the screen is disclosed, to show that users are available. The Internet allows both synchronous and asynchronous interactions, and presence becomes more important on sites where the former occur. Virtual world websites and sites that enable chat between users may rely on disclosing presence to its members, whereas sites that rely on content or that support only asynchronous interactions are less likely to be affected by this type of functionality. On social networking sites like Facebook, presence is signalled by displaying when a user is online, and when was the last time that the user was on Facebook.

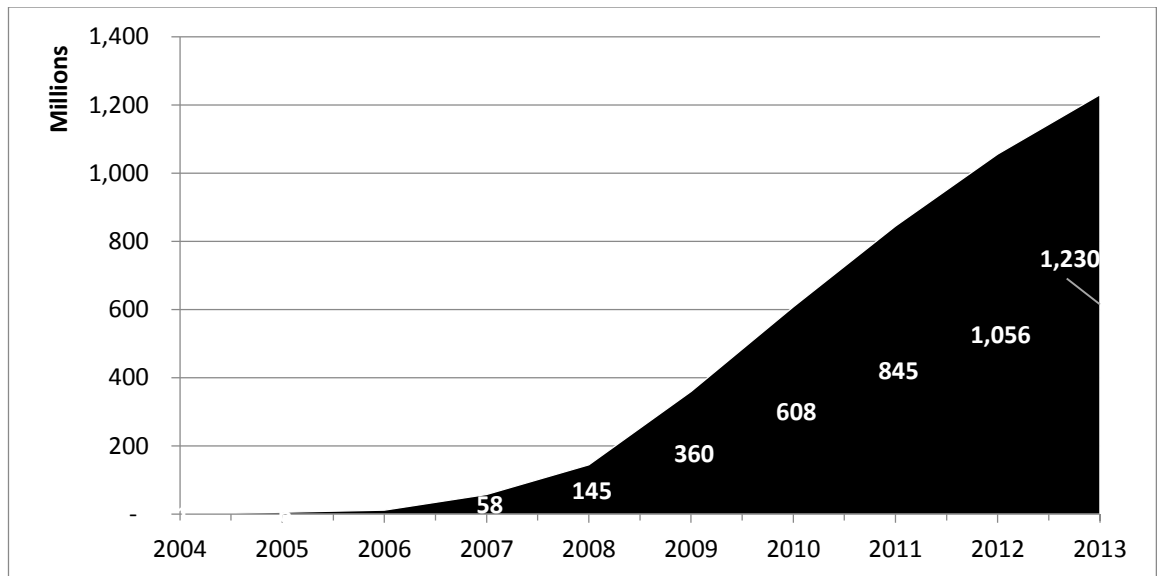
Conversation is another element that can vary across sites depending on the type of interaction that is being enabled or encouraged. Certain sites are conversation focused, such as micro blogging site Twitter, or blogs, whereas other social sites are less centred on conversations and interactions occur through the action itself, as is the case of bookmarking sites that rely on users voting with their clicks to curate the more relevant content, or as in social gaming where interaction is based on particular tasks rather than conversation. In any case, sharing something with others is a cornerstone of social media websites and Web 2.0

From a structural perspective, a functional classification as proposed by Kietzmann et al. (2011) supports the use of Facebook as the context for this research. Of the seven functionalities identified in the model, it is evident that Facebook has a focus on

relationships, on this platform the main use that consumers make of it is to establish and maintain social relationships (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). However, the performance of the other six functionalities is also available on the platform, just as mentioned above. For this reason, this thesis argues that from a structural perspective, the selection of Facebook as the context of the research rather than other social media sites is preferable, as this will allow to test the effects of social influence marketing activities in an environment that allows for almost all the functionalities that a social media site is likely to provide.

The prominence of Facebook as an ideal platform for enquiry in social media as a context is evident from a technological, sociological and structural perspective. The platform has evolved from a place to simply make and maintain relationships, to a platform where online communities are created, and there is co-creation of content that can be displayed and shared among its members. Furthermore, the importance that Facebook as a social media platform among Internet users is also reflected in the numbers of users and in the interactions that occur on this platform. By the end of 2013, Facebook had 1.23 billion monthly active users worldwide, from which 757 million log in on a daily basis (Facebook Newsroom, 2013). On average, the mean of connections on this platform (i.e. Facebook friends) is 338, with a median of 200 (A. Smith, 2014).

Figure 6- Facebook monthly users



Source: Facebook Newsroom (2013)

With over 40% of the total Internet user population logging in at least once a month, Facebook is the most popular social media website to date. In the UK, the number of users logging in on a daily basis is 24 million (42% of the Internet users); Facebook is also one of the most visited sites in this country.

1.8 Social media and brand communities

Marketing practitioners are interested in enhancing their presence in social media and facilitate the appearance of brand communities around their brands (H. J. Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002). A brand community is defined as “specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand (A. Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). The value that marketers see in these efforts is that they provide a direct channel of communication between the consumer and the brand, enabling business to learn about consumer perceptions, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with loyal consumers of the brand to develop enhanced product offerings (Franke & Shah, 2003; McAlexander et al., 2002). Furthermore, there is research that supports the view that brand communities influence their members evaluations and actions (A. M. Muniz & Schau, 2005), contribute to the

dissemination of information (J. Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; S. Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Jin, Cheung, Lee, & Chen, 2009) and foster consumer engagement (Alversia, 2013; Brodie et al., 2013; Gummerus, 2012; Lee et al., 2011). In terms of marketing outcomes, online brand communities are effective tools for influencing sales in both company-owned and independent websites (Adjei, Noble, & Noble, 2010a).

Before the existence of social media websites brand communities were formed as offline groups of people with shared interests (e.g. Harley Davidson brand communities are a common example found in the literature). These communities also developed activities in online environments, with early online communities already existing in Web 1.0, usually within company websites or built around online forums (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). However, the characteristics and functionalities of social media websites facilitate the creation of groups, as well as the process of sharing information and conversation with others at levels that Web 1.0 sites cannot match (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Consequently, the advantages that social media offers in connecting businesses with consumers are making marketers more interested in fostering brand communities in these environments (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The following section will further discuss the adoption of social media websites by brands.

1.9 Social media adoption by brands

Social media is also relevant as a context because of the growing importance of this medium for businesses. Companies' presence in these environments is also increasing: Barnes et al. (Barnes et al., 2013) found that in 2013, 77% of Fortune 500 companies were already using at least one type of social media website. Within the range of social media platforms that are available, Facebook is a preferred platform for companies to use due to the number of consumers that can be found there (829 million daily active users on average in June 2014 according to Facebook). The advantages of choosing Facebook as the specific context for this research were explained in Section 1.7, where in the classification of social media websites Facebook emerged as a type of site that allows for multiple functionalities and high levels of openness and connectedness, as well as medium levels of social presence. Furthermore, Facebook's leading position as the top

social networking site means that many brand managers chose to develop a presence through this platform. In this matter, Table 7 shows the presence of brands from a wide range of industries in this environment, including fast moving consumer goods categories such as soft drinks, and biscuits; technology, retailing brands and fashion.

Table 7- Top 10 Facebook brand fan pages based on number of fans -2014

	Brand	Facebook fans
1.	Coca Cola	87,399,253
2.	Red Bull	44,327,988
3.	Converse	40,398,053
4.	Samsung Mobile	38,830,535
5.	Nike Football	37,911,194
6.	Play station	37,895,459
7.	Oreo	37,302,332
8.	Starbucks	37,278,614
9.	Walmart	34,656,458
10.	KFC	34,428,513

Source: (SocialBakers, 2014)

Thus the importance of ensuring the presence of a brand in this environment is positive for the brand and for the consumer experience; and it becomes of importance for marketing theory and practice. This is especially so since the presence of brands in an environment that was initially designed for users to interact with others is generating resentment due to the invasion of branded content (Fournier & Avery, 2011). The following section introduces the concept of Brand Fan Pages and examines some of the challenges that marketers face when attempting to make these types of brand online presence a positive element of the marketing communication mix.

1.10 Facebook brand fan pages

In Facebook, users can also connect with brands by becoming” fans” of that brand on their dedicated brand fan page. This modality of online presence was introduced in 2007,

3 years after the initial launch of the platform(Hof, 2007). Brand fan pages have become a type of online brand communities, where brand fans can share their enthusiasm about the brand with other members with a common interest in the brand, and be aware of news regarding that brand, as well as the promotional activities being undertaken (Kozinets, 1999). Fan pages also provide greater insights into how the fans engage with the brand as well as some behavioural and demographic and information of the fans. Brand fan pages are a reflection of the customers' relationship with the brand, and users of Facebook can display their affiliation to a particular brand on their profile (McAlexander et al., 2002). Furthermore, this affiliation is currently used to conduct targeted advertising based on interest, and by external web-based and mobile-based applications to enhance their user experience. Thus brand pages broaden the brand-customer relationship beyond transactional settings (A. Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), and also provide a source of information and social benefits to the members (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). Although the exact number of Facebook Fan pages is constantly changing, due to the easy procedure associated with opening one, official figures released by Facebook in 2012, reported 42 million Fan Pages on their platform (Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012).

1.11 Challenges associated with the management of Facebook fan pages

A challenge associated with the use of fan pages by a brand is to elicit engagement behaviours towards it, by attracting people's attention and inducing them to click on the page to become a fan, or clicking on the content (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). This latter behaviour of clicking on the content generated in the fan page can lead to more specific behaviours, constrained by the platform functionalities, such as showing support and liking the content itself, clicking on the "share" button and posting it in the user's personal profile or over one of the user's connections, as well as commenting and clicking on any hyperlink that will lead the user towards content in another part of the web. Consumer engagement with the brand in its social media presence is the top metric for marketing practitioners (eMarketer, 2013c). From all the different metrics that practitioners use to measure engagement in these platforms, the interaction rate was cited as the most important metric by 85.7% of the sample of a survey conducted with US agency and marketing executives (eMarketer, 2014a).

There is emerging research that looks at the factors determining the types of behaviours in an online context. For instance, Li et al. (2012) propose and tested via simulations a model that used social influence factors as determinants of behavioural outcomes, including click-through rates. Moreover, Naylor et al. (Naylor et al., 2012) also found, in their empirical study, that social influence factors such as mere virtual presence can affect intentions when engaging with a brand in social media settings, when the sources of influence have certain demographic characteristics. Thus there have been recent calls to provide further empirical evidence on what other factors determine engagement behaviours in social media settings (Marketing Science Institute, 2014; Schultz & Peltier, 2013).

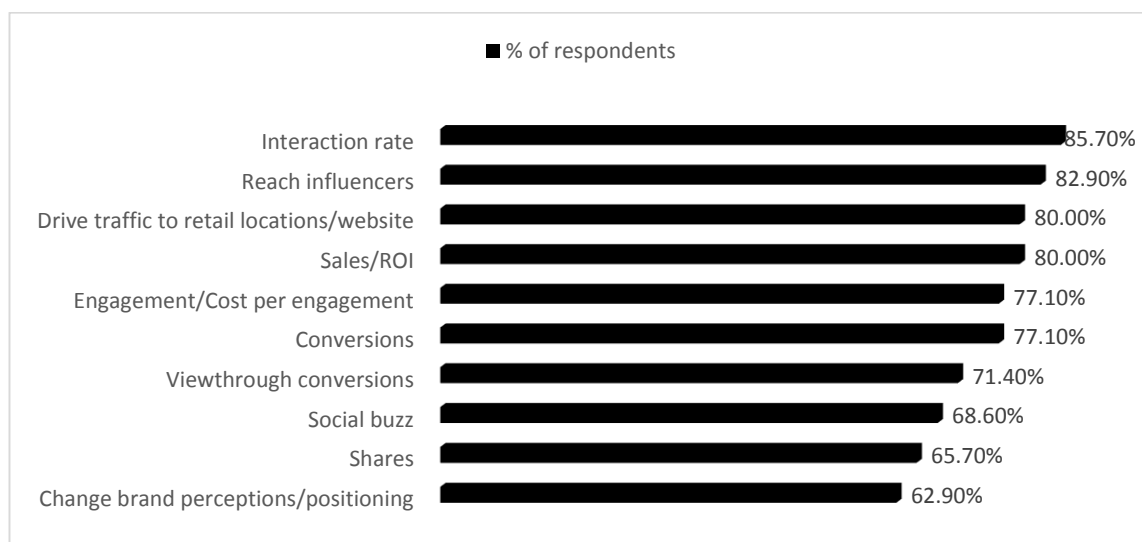
One more challenge that emerges regarding brand presence in this environment is the decision to make physical location of that brand a proxy for the segmentation of fan pages. Some large brands use a country or even towns as unit of segmentation of their online presence (e.g. SPAR, a convenience store has a Fan page for the UK but also Fan pages for many of the locations across the UK). Similar behaviours are also followed by brands across different categories and countries (e.g. Coca Cola, Starbucks), with financial implications for the management, and promotion of each of those different outlets. As investment in social media is expected to keep growing as a percentage of the marketing budget (MacMillan, 2013) and the focus of marketing activities in this environment remains on customer engagement, research that can provide guidance on how to increase customer engagement is needed. In particular, evidence is needed that supports the theory that customer engagement behaviours, in the form of interactions with social media brand presence, increases as a consequence of the 'localisation' of Facebook fan pages.

1.12 Consumer engagement as a key performance metric in social media

The concept of consumer engagement is used in advertising and among marketing practitioners, ranking consumer engagement as one of the top priorities of online marketing activities (eMarketer, 2013c; Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009). More recently, consumer engagement has also interested management and marketing academics as a subject of study (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011; Mollen & Wilson,

2010). Among the reasons behind this interest are that consumer engagement is associated with consumer trust (Hollebeek, 2011), satisfaction and loyalty (Bowden, 2009) and commitment (Chan and Li, 2010), all of them strong indicators of long-term sales, word-of-mouth and brand advocacy. The positive outcomes derived from consumer engagement behaviours (CEBs) means that marketing practitioners use these as key performance indicators of the success of marketing activities through social media (eMarketer, 2013c). Many of the metrics used by marketing practitioners relate to behavioural outcomes (Figure 7), with a clear focus on interaction rates that occur on the different social media platforms.

Figure 7- Metrics used to measure engagement by marketing practitioners (2013)



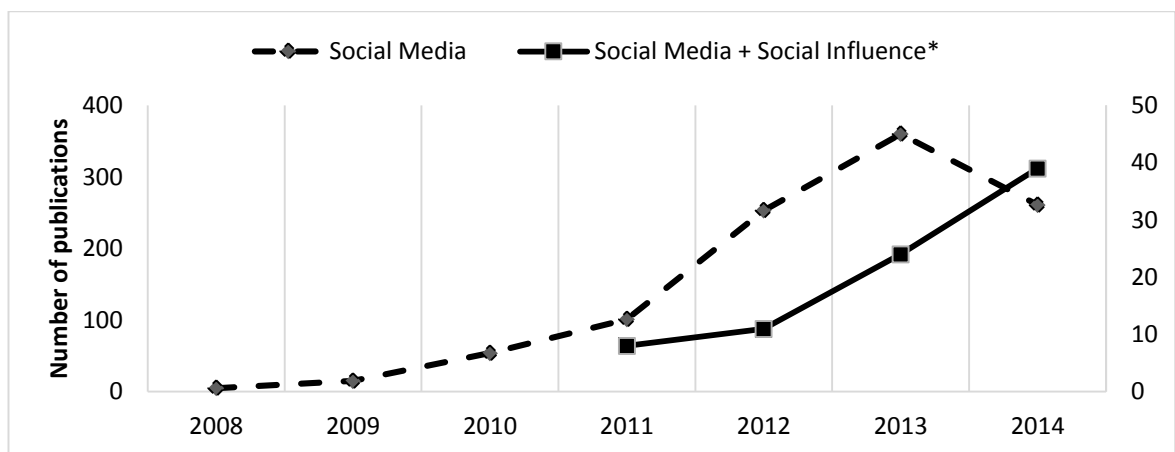
Source: (eMarketer, 2014a)

In the case of Facebook, these engagement behaviours are constrained by the things that the platform allows its users to do. In the context of a Facebook Fan Page, users can engage in page liking behaviour of any fan brand page. This leads to a user being able to follow the content that the brand page publishes. Users can also leave comments on the Fan Page publicly and privately. Regarding the content that is published by the brand, users' interactive activities are also constrained. Once content from the fan page appears in the newsfeed (which is the main page for Facebook users) users can "like" the content, leave a "comment" on it, "share" it into their personal profile or into a friend's profile.

1.13 Social influence in social media

This thesis will argue that the literature on social influence can provide a theoretical guidance to many of the challenges that marketers face when managing fan pages and looking to increase customer engagement behaviours. Throughout this introductory chapter, social media has been presented as focusing on communication and interaction between consumers and consumers and brands. Although there are many theories that explain the social influence factors affecting behaviour both offline and online, this thesis calls for a focus on the effects of immediacy as a determinant of customer engagement. Research interest in social influence in the context of social media websites has been increasing in the last four years (Figure 8)

Figure 8- Number of publications related to "social media" and "social influence"



*Secondary Axis

Source: Science Direct (2014)

Research has found that social factors affect and moderate distinct elements of consumer behaviour, such as how the relationships are built between actors (Koo et al., 2011), the creation of attitudes towards brands (Naylor et al., 2012) and the interaction with paid advertising in this medium (Li et al., 2012). However this thesis will argue that social influence factors can also affect consumer engagement behaviours.

In referring to the challenges associated to the management of Facebook brand fan pages in Section 1.10.1, this thesis has argued that a social influence approach potentially provide evidence that might alleviate these problems. This thesis will identify in the following chapters how immediacy, as a social influence factor, and the

operationalisation of consumer engagement behaviours as an outcome of social influence in this context can help marketing practitioners to take better decisions when managing their online presence in these settings. Furthermore, there is a need to increase the amount of empirical evidence supporting the effects of social influence factors on different ranges of online behaviours. Section 3 will summarise the major arguments that this chapter is putting forward and outline the aims and objectives of this thesis.

Section 3: Aim and objectives of this research

The aim of this thesis is to measure the degree of social influence that the construct of immediacy can have on customer engagement behaviours with brands in social media settings, from a social impact perspective. From a marketing perspective, online interactions between brands and consumer keep increasing (Fournier & Avery, 2011) in an environment where physical distance is becoming less relevant. Understanding the dynamics of online interactions between brands and consumer to improve the achievement of marketing objectives and consumer experience are considered a marketing priority (Marketing Science Institute, 2014). The distance relationship between consumer and brand is known as immediacy, and this thesis aims to provide empirical evidence of how these different forms of distance relationships (immediacies) affect consumer-brand interactions online in the context of Facebook Fan Pages.

Social media environments are characterised by two-way interactions between brands and consumers, and among consumers (Daugherty et al., 2008), and increased interest is being given to how they influence each other (Li et al., 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). One force influencing behaviour in two-way interactions is social impact, which, in social psychology, explains changes in behaviours such as the formation of groups and polarisation of views (DiFonzo et al., 2013) or compliance to the views of others (Wolf & Bugaj, 1990). There is also extensive evidence of the effects that it has on several behavioural outcomes (Wolf & Bugaj, 1990; Bibb Latané, 1981; Bibb Latané & Wolf, 1981; Bassett & Latane, 1976). Evidence from empirical research suggests that interactions that occur between persons and the social impact that these generate also determine the propagation of sub-cultures, language and the formation of group

behaviour, as well as participation (DiFonzo et al., 2013; Bibb Latané & Bourgeois, 1996; Nowak, Szamrej, & Latane, 1990).

As a consequence of these studies, our understanding of how people affect the behaviour of others has developed. However, the technological changes supported by Web 2.0 raise new questions of how interactions and communication in computer-mediated environments are affecting consumer behaviour (Blank, 2013). Social media websites enable consumers to do more than only consume content in their sites. Social media websites allow consumers to have a dynamic interaction with other consumers and the website owners as well as to create their own content that can be shared among their peers. From a marketing perspective, social media websites have opened a new channel of communication between the brands and consumers, and companies are increasingly looking for ways to benefit from their presence in this medium in order to increase awareness, customer satisfaction, sales and consumer engagement with the brand (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010).

It is productive to conceptualise customer engagement behaviours as a form of social influence. Social influence has been theorised within the social psychology discipline and there is scope to draw on this body of work to inform enquiry into online consumer behaviour within social media websites. This thesis selects social impact theory as an appropriate lens through which to examine customer engagement behaviour. The following research objectives are developed to answer this question:

1. To explore if immediacy is a social influence determinant in online contexts.
2. To explore and measure if different forms of immediacy have the same effect on consumer behaviours in social media settings.
3. To explore social influence moderators in social media environments
4. To measure the effect of other factors, such as product involvement and platform intensity usage, as moderators of online interactions between consumers and brands in social media settings.

This chapter provided supportive evidence for the further development of research on customer engagement behaviours in the context of social media. More specifically,

challenges that derive from changes in Web 2.0 sites and from the characteristics of social media websites mean that maintaining a brand's presence in these environments involves several challenges in order to procure positive outcomes. This chapter has reviewed academic and practitioners' literature relating to the context of the Internet, with a focus on social media websites. Links were made between this particular type of medium and the way communication and marketing theory has changed. These changes can be aggregated in four main themes developed in this section:

Social media use is increasing among Internet users and businesses. As the use of the Internet increases, it is becoming more evident that this tool is changing how people communicate, make decisions, establish relations, make purchase decisions and in general how they spend their time. Social media websites are a type of site that is gaining a large share of the time spent on the Internet. Social media use is also increasing among brands and companies looking to obtain positive outcomes from their presence and interaction with consumers in these environments. This has led academics in many research fields, including management and marketing, to devote efforts to describing, analysing and assessing the impact that of sites this type in their particular field.

Social media websites are distinct types of websites. Part of the effort to expand our understanding in various fields of study has come from information systems literature. A substantial number of conceptual papers have focused on what elements make social media websites distinct from other types of websites. In this thesis, three different frameworks, derived from technological, sociological and structural perspectives on social media websites have been applied to assess the suitability of different social media websites in order to choose one as the ideal context for analysis in this research. Based on these frameworks, Facebook was the preferred platform, as it has most of the functionalities and sociological and technological characteristics of social media websites.

Social media websites as a driver of changes in consumer behaviour. In this chapter it was also made evident that, within marketing, all the technological changes previously mentioned have an impact on consumer behaviour and outcomes. In particular, this type

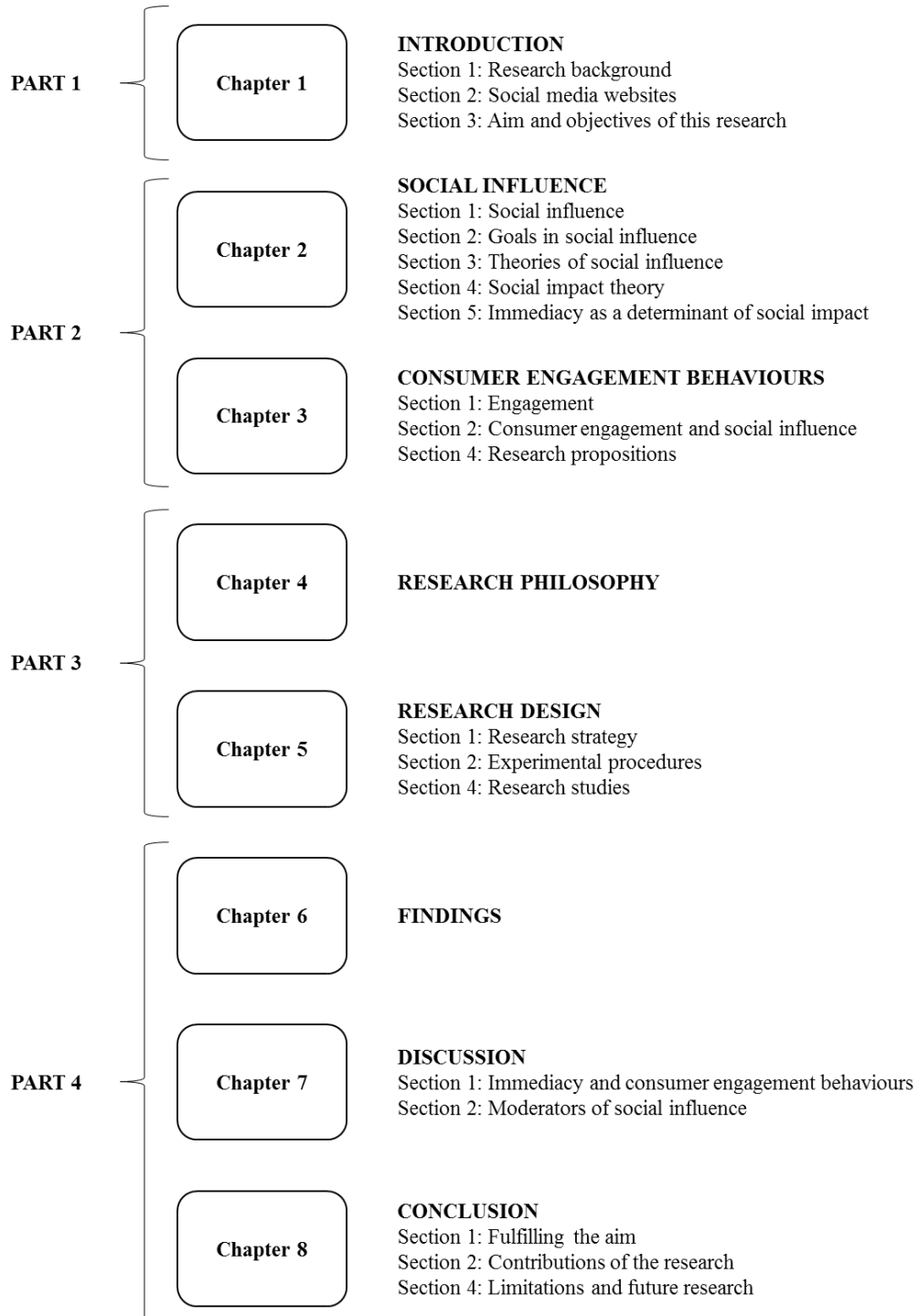
of technology has increased the levels of interaction and participation among consumers and between consumers and the brands. Marketers are facing new challenges in order to drive positive behavioural outcomes from the interaction of brands with consumers in these environments.

Consumer engagement behaviours are a key performance indicator of success for a brand in social media. There is a special focus among marketing academics and practitioners on consumer engagement. From a practitioners' perspective, consumer engagement is usually measured in terms of behavioural outcomes. The presence of these behaviours is associated with positive outcomes for both the company and the consumer, at different levels. Thus, efforts to improve the level of behavioural engagement are a key priority for marketers worldwide.

1.14 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into four major parts: introduction, literature review, methodology and main discussion comprising nine chapters (Figure 9).

Figure 9- Thesis structure



In the first part of this thesis an introduction to the topic and the need for research has been provided. Chapter One has discussed the context of this research, and provided evidence that the changes in online environments and in particular in social media are also generating changes in consumer behaviour. The chapter has also provided evidence that the increasing penetration of the Internet and the growth that social media platforms have experienced in this environment have increased the time that consumers spend in this medium as well as the interactions that consumers can have with other consumers and their brands. These changes are generating a series of challenges and opportunities for marketing academics and practitioners, as the Internet is not only allowing more people to have access to information, but it is also allowing consumers to engage with firms and with other consumers in a variety of forms (e.g.. as a review, a rating, a tweet message attached to a stream of global conversation via a hashtag, a like or dislike, among others) more freely. The influence that these opinions are having on consumer behaviour has been studied in several studies from both academia and practitioners.

Furthermore, Chapter One has argued that social media websites are distinct to previous types of online environments and provided a framework to classify these sites, based on the functionalities that make this websites different from others. The chapter has developed the argument that social media is changing communications models and marketing theories, which calls for more studies into this type of online environment, in particular because the immediacy of the interactions are more fluid in these environments. Social media brings new challenges in terms of harnessing those interactions to satisfy consumer's needs and experience in this channel without invading a medium that was initially user-dominated (Fournier & Avery, 2011). The chapter ended by defining the aims and objectives of this thesis.

Part Two in this thesis is the review of the relevant literature. This part is divided into two chapters, each covering different areas that need to be examined in order to frame this research. Chapters Two focus on social psychology literature, following a general-to-specific approach. Chapter two examines the general literature on social influence, covering the types, processes, and modalities of influence. This chapter also identifies the main theories in each of the three modalities (conformity, compliance and social norms), as well as the goals that motivate people to accept social influence. The chapter serves to

define some of the key concepts relating to social influence, but it is also used to determine which of the current theories fit the purpose of examining the effects of immediacy on behaviours. As a result of this examination, social impact theory (SIT) is deemed the most appropriate theory to use as initial framework of this research. The chapter introduces SIT and its main components and reviews the methodologies and empirical results that previous studies have obtained within this theory. Since the focus of this research is immediacy, a greater focus is given to this factor of social impact. The construct of immediacy is examined and differentiated from other similar constructs such as proximity and distance. Then the construct is examined in the context of online environments in order to understand how it differs from its counterpart in offline environments. From the examination of immediacy in online contexts, other similar constructs found in marketing and management literature are identified and contrasted with immediacy. Finally, three forms of immediacy are identified as relevant for this study and are examined from both the management and marketing perspective.

Chapter Three covers the focal behaviours that are going to be used to test the effects of forms of immediacy in online environments. Consumer engagement behaviours are selected not only for their current relevance to the marketing debate, but also because these behaviours are strongly linked with the context of Web 2.0 and social media websites. The chapter provides an examination of the different perspectives of consumer engagement from the social science and marketing literature in order to account for the different manifestations that this construct can have. In addition, evidence that consumer engagement behaviours are subject to social influence forces is also provided, as support for the validity of using these types of behaviours as dependent variables in this study. The types of consumer engagement behaviours on the platform selected for this study are also identified, and their underpinning meanings are also discussed. Finally, Chapter Three also outlines the research propositions of this thesis, and that are linked to the consumer engagement behaviours identified in the selected platform.

Part Three in this thesis develops the methodology used to examine and measure the research propositions outlined in Chapter Three. This part is structured in two chapters. Chapter Four engages in a discussion of the ontological and epistemological choices. The chapter reviews the main philosophical paradigms and argues in favour of a critical realist

approach to answer the research questions raised by this thesis. Chapter Five focuses on the methodological choices for this research, and develops the research design of this thesis. The section argues that a mixed methods approach that included focus groups and an experimental design is the most suitable to examine and measure the effects of immediacy under social impact theory. Each of the different stages associated with the design of experiments are described in this section, as well as the procedures undertaken for data collection and analysis. The chapter ends by providing the results of the data analysis of the data, assessing the sufficiency and validity of the data.

Part Four discusses the main findings. This part consists of two chapters, with chapter six presenting the main findings of this research. This chapter is structured based on the research propositions outlined in Chapter Three, and presents the results from the statistical analyses described in Chapter Five. Chapter Seven discusses the implications of the results for each of the types of immediacy and links them back to marketing and social psychology literature. The chapter also discusses the implications of these results within social impact theory. Finally, Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter, outlines and develops the theoretical, contextual and managerial contributions of this thesis. A discussion of the limitations and possible future research is also presented in this chapter.

This chapter has discussed the basis for the thesis to be advanced. It has introduced the research context and provided a rationale for the focus of the research. The scope, purpose and structure of the thesis have been detailed and the following chapters build upon this foundation.

Chapter 2: Social influence

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of social influence, and will argue that a social influence perspective is appropriate to provide answers to the challenges that both marketing as a science and marketing practitioners are encountering when placing brands in social media environments. In particular, this chapter will provide evidence that social influence can offer a theoretical base that might explain the generation of consumer engagement behaviours on Facebook fan pages. This chapter will review the fundamental theories in the field, and will investigate the elements that explain social influence. The chapter is structured in five sections. Section 1 provides definitions for the components of social influence. From an examination of social psychology literature it also identifies the types, processes and modalities of social influence, the section also identifies the main theories of social influence, based on the modality of influence that they aim to explain. Section 2 in this chapter identifies the main goals that drive social influence effects. These goals will be applied in the context of online brand communities in order to support the argument for a research enquiry of engagement behaviours in fan pages from a social influence perspective. Section 3 assesses the theories identified in this chapter in order to determine which one would be the best fit to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Section 4 reviews social impact theory, its principles and main components. Finally, Section 5 focuses on one of the factors identified by the theory, the construct of immediacy. This section differentiates immediacy from other similar constructs, and then examines how immediacy is affected in online environments. By building upon recent theoretical advances in the construct of distance plus the empirical evidence gathered over several years of testing SIT empirically, three forms of immediacy are identified: physical, temporal and social immediacy. The section ends examining similar constructs and discussing the role of product involvement as a social influence moderator.

Section 1: Social influence

2.2 Section introduction

This section evaluates the literature on social influence in order to provide criteria to assess the most appropriate theory to drive this research enquiry. This thesis argues that a social influence perspective is appropriate to provide guidance on how to increase engagement behaviours on Facebook fan pages. This section is structured in a way decomposes the phenomenon of social influence based on the types, processes and modalities identified in the literature. The section also identifies the main theories that explain social influence changes in behaviours and attitudes, based on three modalities: conformity, social norms and compliance.

2.3 Types of social influence

The changes in behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals as a result of their interaction with others have been studied extensively in social psychology, where the concept of ‘social influence’ is widely recognised (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Turner, 1991). Literature on social influence is extensive, with early studies looking at how others people’s opinion affects our own responses (Asch, 1961, 1956, 1955). Evidence from these studies suggests that the influence of others can result in people acting in a different way as a result of this influence. Since then, empirical studies on social influence have continued to provide supporting evidence that what others do and say affects our reactions. Research into social influence has focused on persuasion and the formation of attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Harkins, Williams, & Latane, 1977) the role of various sources (i.e. minorities vs majorities) in exerting influence (Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; W. Wood, Lundgren, Ouellette, Busceme, & Blackstone, 1994) or the effect of gender on the predisposition to be subject to social influence (Venkatesh & Morris, 2000).

Studies have also extended to online environments, where evidence suggests that despite the loss of physical cues such as proximity, or other physical characteristics, these interactions with others still affect persuasion and conformity (R. Guadagno & Cialdini,

2005; Spears & Lea, 1992) as well as intentions to participate in online communities (U. M. Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004).

In social psychology literature, there is a consensus that there are two types of social influence: informational and normative influence (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Turner, 1991; M. F. Kaplan & Miller, 1987; Jones & Gerard, 1967; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Informational influence occurs when a desire to form an accurate interpretation of reality or behaviour correctly exists. Informational social influence is accepted when the influence is perceived as being instrumental to the solution of a problem confronting an individual, or when it adds to what an individual already considers to be an important aspect of their own reality (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). For instance, and in the context of marketing, the influence of word-of-mouth communication is explained by the effects that informational influence has on consumers who are looking for means to assess the performance of a product that they have not yet tried (Wangenheim & Bayon, 2004; Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale, 1998).

Normative influence, on the other hand, comes from the goal of obtaining social approval from others (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). This approval does not have to come only from others, but it can also occur when someone is looking to conform to what he or she believes is the right behaviour (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). This type of influence is linked to power processes in relation to other groups, social interdependence and surveillance by other group members (Turner, 1991). Normative influence has been found to directly and indirectly affect several forms of consumer behaviour. For instance, empirical evidence has found that normative influence moderates the relationship between impulse buying and consumers' buying behaviour (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Other studies have also found direct relationships between normative influence and purchase intent (HoJung, Chung, & Pysarchik, 2004) or through the mediating effect of other constructs such as consumer animosity, quality of judgement of products and purchase intentions (Yu-An Huang, 2010).

Both types of influence reflect the dependence that a person has on others, and Turner (Turner, 1991) argues that they can be seen as aspects of a wider theory that social

interdependence is the underlying process in social and group interactions. In the following sections, it will become evident that many of the social influence theories concur in accepting the fact that these two types of influence exist, and that different processes and modalities of influence relate to one of these two types of social influence.

2.4 Processes of social influence

Kelman (Kelman, 1961) developed a theory of the processes by which people respond to social influence. He classified these processes into: internalisation, identification and compliance. *Internalisation* occurs “when an individual accepts influence because the induced behaviour is congruent with his value system” (Kelman, 1961). In this case, someone decides to be subject to social influence because the induced behaviour is intrinsically rewarding, it helps the individual to find solutions to their problems, or because it is demanded by their own value system. When internalisation occurs, the characteristics of the source are important because they elicit influence, in particular in terms of the credibility or strength that this source of influence has (Kelman, 1961; McGuire, 1968; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). An example of the process of internalisation is when someone takes advice from an expert, because the target of influence finds this expert’s knowledge relevant to his or her own problems and aligned to his or her value system.

Identification occurs “when an individual adopts behaviour derived from another person or group because this behaviour is associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to this person or group” (Kelman, 1961). Accepting influence from people or groups that a person feels identified with thus becomes a way to maintain a desired relationship with others. Kelman (1961) posits that this relationship can take different forms; for instance, classical identification occurs when the target takes on the role (partially or completely) of the source of influence. Other forms of identification can be as reciprocal role relationships, and this happens when the roles of the target and source are defined with reference to one another, that is they become dynamic. In order for a reciprocal relationship to exist, there needs to be a mutually shared expectation of one another’s

behaviour, so that the both participants can behave in line with the requirements of that particular relationship.

Compliance occurs when “an individual accepts influence from another person or from a group because he hopes to achieve a favourable reaction from the other” (Kelman, 1961). Compliance may occur because the target of influence is looking to either get a reward or avoid negative outcomes, as a result of complying. Unlike in the process of internalisation, where the reward is in the content of the induced behaviour, in compliance, the content is less important, but rather the social effect attached to that content is instrumental in the production of a positive outcome for the target. This also means that cognitive and behavioural changes are only expressed when the source of influence can observe them. Compliance research on arousal and affective states has focused on the effect of emotions on a target’s cognitions, as well as the behavioural outcomes (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). For instance, Whatley et al. (Whatley, Webster, Smith, & Rhodes, 1999) posit that individuals can alleviate feelings of shame and fear via public compliance, and guilt and pity via private compliance. Their findings also suggest that public compliance is greater than the private form, supporting the importance of the social effects associated with this type of behaviour. Furthermore, research on consumer behaviour has looked at how certain behavioural strategies can increase compliance at a behavioural level. For example, Reingen (Reingen, 1978) developed and tested via experimentation strategies that could induce the desired behaviour from people.

2.5 Modalities of social influence

Types and processes of social influence relate to each other, as informational influence, can be achieved through the process of internalisation, and normative influence, involves processes of compliance and identification (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975). The types of influence and the processes discussed so far have been those that are activated by these two underlying forms of influence. The following sections will focus on the kind of responses that arise and the goals that those responses attempt to achieve when those processes are activated. This thesis will first provide definitions of three of the responses widely studied in literature, based on the extensive work to synthesise this literature

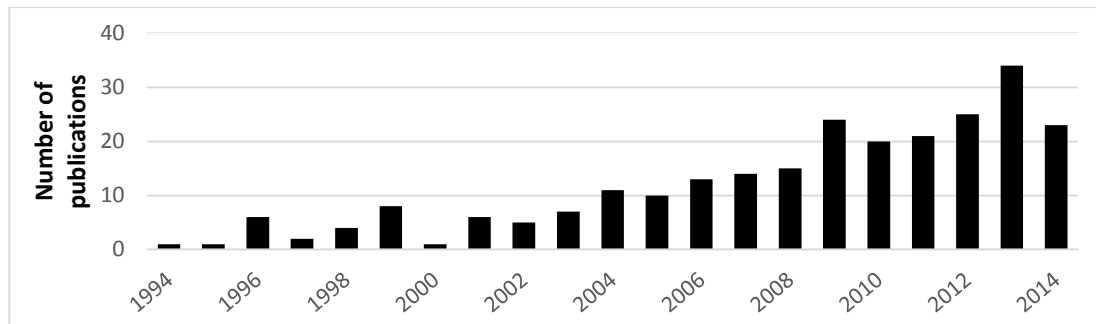
conducted by Cialdini and Trost (2004, 1998) who classified these modalities of influence as conformity, compliance and social norms. It is also under this classification, that theories of social influence will be categorised and examined in the following sections.

2.6 Conformity

Conformity is define as “the act of changing one’s behaviour to match the responses of others” (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004, p.206). This behaviour involves a movement from one initial position to a contradictory one when a perceived or real pressure is applied, and where this pressure is represented by the direct and indirect effect of other individuals. Conformity does not necessarily mean changing to an opposite perspective, it can also involve remaining in the same position as a result of peer pressure, a term known as conformity by omission (Sorrels & Kelley, 1984).

The amount of literature studying conformity, both online and offline, has been steadily increasing (Figure 10 shows a growing trend of studies with “conformity” as their keyword in the last 20 years) which reflects the interest that this type of influence has in literature. From a marketing perspective, research on consumer behaviour and conformity have found that this type of social influence can drive consumption practices and choices in the market place (Bellezza, Gino, & Keinan, 2014). Several studies have found that consumers are motivated to behave like those around them, as well as to make choices that they feel is valuable for their in-group in order to increase affiliation and express desired identities (William O. Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1990; W. O. Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005; McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010; McFerran et al., 2010).

Figure 10- Studies on conformity



Adapted from: Science Direct (2014)

Several studies of conformity behaviour have been found in the context of online environments and social media. Want et al. (X. Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012) argue that the consumer socialisation that occurs in online environments directly affects purchasing decisions, through conformity behaviour. Research on how socialisation with peers in online environments affect behaviour is limited (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003). Some empirical work conducted in this context has found that social influence and conformity behaviour affect behavioural outcomes such as purchasing behaviour, as a result of the spatial (Bell & Song, 2007) and social (Iyengar, Han, & Gupta, 2009) proximity that exist between consumers. Social influence has also been found to affect media consumption and frequency of use of social networking sites (Trusov, Bodapati, & Bucklin, 2010). However, the socialisation that occurs between brands and consumers, and the presence of conformity behaviour as a result of these interactions remains an understudied field. In particular, no studies were found in this review on how a brand's presence in these environments can also exert social influence and affect engagement behaviours of consumers.

In the review conducted by Cialdini and Goldstein (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), three theories were identified to explain conformity behaviour: the objective consensus approach, conversion theory and social impact theory. These three theories will be examined in the following sections.

2.6.1 Theories on conformity: the objective consensus approach

The objective consensus approach. Within social influence theories, the level of consensus is the defining feature of majority and minority status. Mackie (Mackie, 1987) suggests that the ability of majorities and minorities to induce privately accepted attitude change occurs via systematic or non-systematic processing. Systematic processing refers to the effortful evaluation and integration of message content or issue-relevant information. Systematic processing can produce attitude change that is enduring and generalised to related issues. On the other hand, non-systematic processing refer to the recipient's focus on factors in the persuasion context rather than on the message or issue. When someone processes information non-systematically, and adopts a position towards that information, this is based on the presence or absence of persuasion cues, with little focus on the message content (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, 1981).

The results from a series of experiments support Mackie's (1987) *objective consensus* view of majority influence. In her view, the agreement of the majority on a particular position informs recipients about the probable validity of the arguments presented, directs attention to them, and results in the majority's messages receiving considerable processing. Supportive evidence for this view by Erb & Bohner (2001) established that consensus did bias information processing; it did not operate merely as a peripheral cue that fostered the heuristic adoption of a position (Martin et al. 2002).

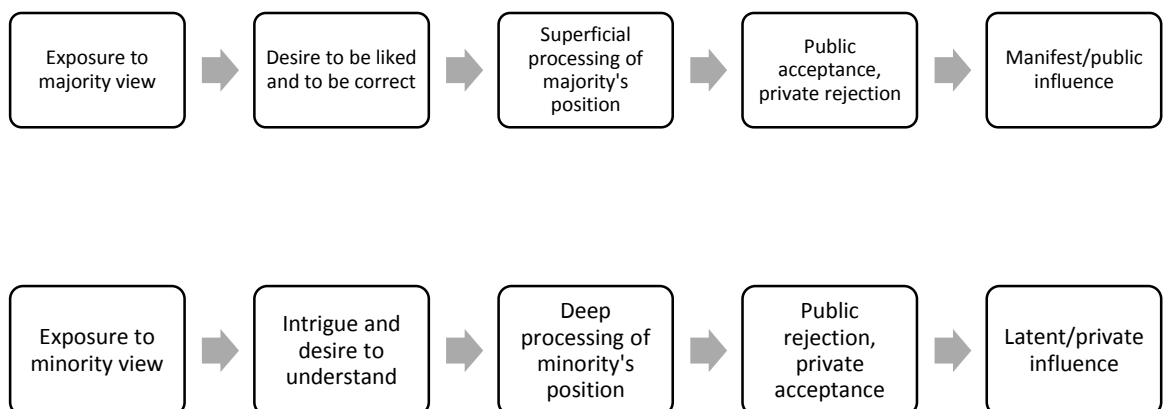
In online environments, majorities have been found to change consumer decision-making in the context of answering health questions (Lau, Kwok, & Coiera, 2011). Online users changed their responses as a result of social feedback that they found in online sources of information. Furthermore, in the context of social media, Kien-Weng Tan and Jin-Cheon (Kien-Weng Tan & Jin-Cheon, 2013) analysed how this model applies to the influence of bloggers. They analysed the relationship between engagement style, persuasion style and degree of conformity of individual bloggers. In line with the objective consensus approach, their study found that bloggers were more likely to conform to the views of other more influential bloggers in the type content that they posted. The findings also suggest the existence of social influence in the online context. They also found that the level of influence was time dependent, which was something that the model did not

predict or expected. This suggests a dynamic nature for social influence and conformity behaviour. However the theory did not evolve to account for this dynamic nature of interactions and its effects across time.

2.6.2 Theories on conformity: conversion theory

Conversion theory argues that a deviant minority can influence a majority, even in perceptual judgments. The theory suggests that all group members can exert influence and be influenced, whether they are part of a majority or a minority (a schematic representation of this influence is illustrated in Figure 11). Moscovici (1976) proposed that majority influence leads individuals to comply publicly with the influence source while retaining their original viewpoints, whereas minority influence leads to private acceptance of new ideas and eventually social change. Although Moscovici's model purports to account for both majority and minority effects, his empirical research has been concerned primarily with minority influence and the factors that enhance it.

Figure 11- Schematic representation of conversion theory



Source: (J. R. Smith & Haslam, 2012)

Conversion theory can be considered to be a micro level theory of social influence, as it focuses on the internal processes that occur at the individual level (Pratkanis, 2011). Research in the field has found that different behavioural outcomes result, depending on the nature of influence (if it comes from a minority or a majority). For example, Martin et al. (Martin, Martin, Smith, & Hewstone, 2007) found that minority influence can lead to stronger attitudes and behavioural outcomes, as this relates with the deep systematic processing that this type of influence elicits. Majority influence on the other hand, led to changes more as a results of conformity and the innate desire to be liked or accepted by the group. Other examples that support conversion theory have found similar effects when applied in the context of radicalisation (Borum, 2011) or advocacy (N. L. Kerr, 2002). Within the field of marketing and the online context, the effects of majority and minority influence have been investigated with respect to electronic word-of-mouth communication and its impact at attitudinal and behavioural levels. In consistence with conversion theory, empirical findings support the idea that exposure to majority views in reviews will affect the personal experience of a consumer and make him or her reassess his or her own personal experience if it contradicts that of the majority (Allsop, Bassett, & Hoskins, 2007) . The influence also appears to be moderated by the level of expertise that the consumer has in relation to a particular product, where social influence is reduced as the personal experience increases (Zheng, Zhao, & Stylianou, 2011).

Some attempts have been made to integrate parts of the literature on minority influence, self-categorisation, conformity and non-systematic processing. The most successful effort has been that of Latané (1981), who proposed a single theoretical framework to account for both majority and minority influence effects and other "social impact" situations present in the theories previously discussed. The following section in this chapter presents an evaluation of social impact theory in more detail, in terms of the empirical results achieved and an assessment of its sufficiency.

2.6.3 Theories on conformity: social influence model

Social influence model (SIM) is a formal model of group influence based on probabilities adapted from a computer simulation of jury decision making (DICE) and developed by Penrod and Hastie (1980, 1979). The social influence process represented by this model builds on both conformity (majority) and minority influence effects, and the manner in which these processes operate is clearly defined. The theoretical assumptions that guide the formulation of quantitative expressions to represent the persuasion process in a simulation are assumed to hold for other group influence situations as well. The parameters that SIM uses to predict social influence are: transition probabilities, scores for individual resistance to persuasion, group size, probability of choosing one of two answers, and number of sources of influence.

Transition probabilities specify the likelihood that an individual will be influenced to change a response to agree with that of the influence source as a function of the proportion of group members in his or her own (target) faction as opposed to the proportion in the influence (source) faction at a given point in time or cycle during the course of an influence trial. Following the model determinant variables, the individual resistance to persuasion score assumes that individual group members will differ in their susceptibility to persuasion from other group members. In this model, each individual group member is assigned a different persuasion resistance score, sampled from a normal distribution that varies around the mean value. Group size refers to the total number of individuals present in the model simulation, and SIM makes a distinction between the group size and the number of influence sources. The number of influence sources is used within the model in order to simulate majority and minority influence processes. Finally, a probability is also assigned to the action of choosing one of the possible responses. The limitation of the model is that its design provides challenges for empirical testing outside computer simulations, which has limited the propagation of supportive studies in real world situations.

2.6.4 Theories on conformity: self-categorisation theory

Self-categorisation theory suggests that a person's subjective sense of self (who they think they are) can be defined at varying levels of abstraction (Turner, 1985). These definitions take the form of "self-categories" that range from conceptions of the self as a unique individual, through to more inclusive definitions in terms of significant group memberships, and then to even more abstract representations of self as a human being (or at an even higher level as an animal). The first two of these levels are particularly important. The first level serves to define an individual in terms of a personal identity that is different from other members of an in-group (Turner, 1982). The second level defines the individual in terms of a social identity that is shared with other members of an in-group but not with members of an out-group. Therefore social identification generates depersonalised self-categorisation, making individuals perceive their motivations and perspective to be psychologically interchangeable with those of others who share the same social identity. This can lead to behaviour that is qualitatively distinct from that which is predicated on personal identity, as it is shaped by, and oriented towards, the interests of the group as a whole. A major contribution of self-categorisation theory is to provide an analysis of "social identity salience" (Oakes, 1987; Turner, 1985). This specifies the processes that dictate whether people define themselves in terms of personal or social identity and, when social identity is salient, which particular group membership serves to guide behaviour. Self-categorisation theory's approach to social influence differs from other social psychological approaches.

In online environments, social cues that can provide elements from which social identity is built have been investigated under the context of impression formation. The online context differs because it can allow anonymity of interactions in certain formats, and, as discussed in Chapter 1, within social media sites, platforms differ in terms of the identity functionalities that they allow to their users (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Empirical research has found that when sites allow the display of social cues, identification of in-group and out-group groups moderates the value of the sources of information (Carr, Vitak, & McLaughlin, 2013). Social cues expressed through mere virtual presence (i.e. where users can just see demographic traits) affects purchase intention and brand perceptions of the brand in online environments (Naylor et al., 2012). However self-categorisation theory only focuses at the micro level of social influence, and disregards the effects of meso level sources of influence, including a number of sources that might affect the types

mental of processing that form those categorisations or the immediacy of the source, which might determine the effect of that influence. Thus, this further supports the adoption of a theory that expands on meso level factors of influence.

2.6.5 Theories on conformity: social impact theory

Social impact theory (Latané, 1981) is a theory that emerged from research on social influence. Social impact is a manifestation of social influence, and is defined as the “changes in physiological states and subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, values and behaviour, that occur in an individual, human or animal, as a result of the real, implied, or imagined presence or actions of other individuals” (Latané, 1981, p.343). Social impact theory is based on three principles that Latané argues affect consumer behavioural, cognitive and sensitive outcomes. There are several elements that make this theory ideal for this research enquiry, empirical factors confirming the predictive strength of this theory are further discussed in Chapter Three.

In online environments, social impact theory has been found to have an effect depending on the number of sources of influence on perceived credibility of those sources and attitudes towards user generated content (Mir & Zaheer, 2012). The theory also draws on some of the elements that help form categorisations and facilitate the existence of social influence. The more important a group is to a target, the closer in distance (immediacy) the group will be perceived, and thus the target will be more likely to change their attitudes or behaviour to conform. Empirical research in the context of social media has found that that social immediacy affects intention to visit and purchase in ecommerce sites, mediated by the effects of normative and informative influence. (Kwahk & Ge, 2012).

Whereas conversion theory and the objective consensus approach only take into account the *micro* level of influence, SIT takes into account the meso level of conformity (Millon, Lerner, & Weiner, 2003). Social influence has three levels of analysis: the *micro* level includes elements such as personality, biology, cognitions and emotions; the *meso* level

focus on the situation and emphasises the social relationships that exist and finally, the *macro* level takes into consideration the social structure (i.e. institutions and organisations) (Pratkanis, 2011). There has been call for research in the field of social psychology to focus at the meso level, since this is the level where most of the phenomenon of interest (people influencing other people) is located. The research questions driving this research are also focused at a meso level, as this thesis is looking at how online representations of brands, with a focus on the immediacy of the source, affect certain consumer engagement behaviours.

2.7 Social norms

The concept of a norm is introduced in this thesis because social norms are a key element to understand social influence phenomena. Norms are defined by Cialdini and Trost (1998) as a group of shared belief systems. Norms were initially described as the habitual custom or “the way we do things” that originated in a group because they help to meet basic needs e.g. role division in early stages of human history or a certain community’s position on killing (Sherif, 1936). All of this group of customs, traditions, standards, rules, values, fashions and other criteria of conduct becomes standardised as a result of constant interactions of individuals.

Although norms are acquired by the individual, they are constructed socially. Therefore, from a social perspective, all norms are the consequence of constant interactions with others that help to create and transmit them (Ostrom, 2000). This leads us to the definition of social norms, which is strongly related to their socially constructed nature. A social norm can be understood as the set of implicit and explicit rules that exists within a group of people as a result of their constant interactions and which have an effect on their actions but are not put in force by explicit laws (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). One of the most important theories that take into account norms as determinants of behaviour is the theory of planned behaviour. The predictive power of subjective norms under this theory has been questioned by many authors. For instance Sheppard et al. (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988), Van den Putte (Van den Putte, 1991) and Godin and Kok (Godin & Kok, 1996) found that this construct was the weakest predictor of intention. However, the

most likely explanation for poor performance with this variable is the use of single item measurements as opposed to multi-item scales (Armitage, 2001). Studies using multi-item scales have found subjective norm to be a strong predictors of intentions (Conner, Martin, Silverdale, & Grogan, 1996; Beck & Ajzen, 1991). Another criticism of the theory comes from the level of focus of social influence that this theory develops, taking into account micro level dimensions of influence (subjective norm) and disregarding the effects of meso and macro level dimensions that can also affect the outcome in terms of intentions and behaviour. Since the focus of this thesis remains at a meso level (i.e. focusing on the distance relationships between source and target of influence) this theory is only acknowledge in this section but it is not used further.

2.8 Compliance

Compliance refers to the action of consenting to a certain request, and all the motivations surrounding this behaviour (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This request can be both explicit, through a formal communicated request in form of oral or written message, or it might also be implicit, as when advertisement portrays the benefits of a certain product without calling for action explicitly, but relying on other cues to make the target audience react in the desired manner. Compliance research has identified several factors that explain this behaviour.

Most of compliance literature looks at affect and arousal as moderators for compliance, by individuals using these states of mind as a means to achieve their goals in the most effective and rewarding manner. For instance, it was found that there was a tendency to comply in order to avoid feelings of shame or fear in public, making the link between emotions and specific goals (the following section expands on the goals that drive social influence including compliance) (Whatley et al., 1999). In terms of arousal, Rind and Strohmetz (2001) found that when people are engaged in an interesting task, and therefore experience arousal from it, they are more likely to comply with a specific request. This behaviour of reciprocity was found in different settings, from increased tipping in restaurants to willingness to help by answering more questions when the subjects were treated with a positive stimulus first (Rind, 1997). There are very few models or theories

on compliance itself; most of the empirical studies have focused on certain techniques or used conformity theories, such as social impact theory (SIT), as theoretical underpinnings. From the review conducted, only the affect-infusion model was found and is described below.

Theories on compliance: affect-infusion model

Affect infusion refers to the process in which emotionally loaded information influences judgement and the judgement outcome (Forgas, 1995). The affect-infusion model (AIM) posits that a target's mood permeates the processing of a request to the extent that the process becomes effortful and exhaustive (Forgas, 1995, 2001). Evidence suggests that mood affects compliance, depending on the requester's and target's levels of information processing. In unconventional requests, where the level of information processing is higher, mood will affect at a higher degree the likelihood of compliance. Conversely, conventional requests are not affected by mood.

The AIM model does not look directly at the determinant of social influence, but rather at how affect levels moderate the mental processes that influence attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Therefore AIM is also a micro level theory of social influence, as it focuses on the internal levels of affect and information processing. However research attempting to support AIM provides some evidence of the influence of others on a target. In the context of marketing, empirical evidence shows that, when reviewing information (e.g. reviews, online posts), consumers tend to give a greater weight to information that shares a similar valence to their current mood (Adaval, 2001). Thus, this evidence indirectly supports the notion that the level of affect of others, when writing reviews, also influence a target's mental processing and the outcomes from it. Another example that supports the argument that AIM explains social influence behaviour comes from an empirical study that found that positive mood influences the willingness to participate and cooperate with others. (Hertel, 1994). These findings suggest that cooperation, which can be seen as a form of conformity, is moderated by the level of affect that the target has at the moment of interaction. Furthermore, an affect-infusion perspective on consumer

engagement behaviours online would suggest that positive moods will result in more participation with brands and other consumers in online environments.

Now that the modalities of social influence and some of the main theories under each modalities have been discussed, the following section reviews revises the goals that people have when accepting social influence.

Section 2: Goals in social influence

2.9 Section Introduction

Section 1 introduced the types, processes and modalities of social influence, and also the key theories that relate to each modality. An important element in social influence theory is to understand the motivations behind the modalities of influence. This section examines the different goals that motivate social influence behaviour. Several authors concur that three main goals are behind the influence wielded by a source over a target: the goal of accuracy, the goal of affiliation and the goal of self-concept (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000; W. Wood, 2000; Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

2.9.1 Goal of accuracy

One of the reasons why people are subject to influence from others is because they try to fill the gaps of information that they may have regarding a focal behaviour or object. Cialdini and Goldstein (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004) argue that letting others fill in that missing information allows people to achieve their goals in a more efficient and rewarding manner. Hence, according to this goal, social influence means the individual aims to behave in the most effective manner when interacting with others. This desire to be informed is thought to affect targets in processing the content of the requested behaviour and can result in change in judgements (W. Wood, 2000). Empirical evidence that supports the existence of the goal of accuracy has demonstrated, for example, that people conform to information supplied by others when reconstructing memories of a certain

stimulus (White, Smith, Terry, Greenslade, & McKimmie, 2009; Meade & Roediger, 2002; Walther et al., 2002). From a marketing perspective, similar effects have been seen in word-of-mouth communication, where receiving experiences from others in a social network that challenge the individuals own experience with a product increases the likelihood of revaluating their own experience (Allsop et al., 2007).

In the context of engagement behaviours in social media, the goal of accuracy may underpin the initial need to enter brand online communities. Brand online communities allow consumers to exchange experiences with other consumers of the brands that they use (Adjei, Noble, & Noble, 2010b). A few qualitative studies have found that consumers join these communities in order to gain insights on high involvement products before buying them, as well as to get to know how to use the products (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008).

2.9.2 Goal of affiliation

Accepting social influence can also be due to a goal of affiliation, as humans are motivated to create and maintain meaningful social relationships with others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Therefore, individuals engage in certain behaviours that they believe others will approve, or as a form of belonging to a certain referent group. One of the clearest examples of our desire to affiliate is that the more we like and approve a person or a group, the more likely we are to take actions in order to maintain that relationship with them or to start imitating their behaviour. Conversely, the norm of reciprocation, that obliges someone to repay to others what they have received from them, also relates to this goal.

In the context of brand communities, the goal of affiliation explains many of the participatory behaviours in these environments. Through brand communities, consumers create and nurture meaningful connections with other consumers and their brands (A. M. Muniz & Schau, 2005). Furthermore, in the context of social media, affiliation to online brand communities provides consumers with social, functional and experiential values

(Brodie et al., 2013; Sicilia & Palazón, 2008). The fact that social value is one of the motivators of consumers to engage in brand communities, further supports a social influence approach to explain some of the engagement behaviours that occur in these environments.

2.9.3 Goal of self-concept

The goal of self-concept relates to the need to be consistent with regard to behaviours, commitments, beliefs and self-ascribed traits (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). An example of this is the need to be consistent to previous behaviours and commitments. For example, Cioffi and Garner (Cioffi & Garner, 1996) found that making an active and open choice in written form, tends to be consistent with holding more extreme views on that position later in time when the respondent is asked again. Thus public commitment tends to be more persistent than a private one. Within the goal of self-concept, research into minorities and majorities has found that the degree of identification with the views of a certain group regardless of whether that group belongs to the majority or minority–affects the processing strategies employed by the target of the influence, and also its final outcome (Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000).

There is evidence that possession of branded products can be used to satisfy the need to build and grow a person’s self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). In addition, as discussed in respect to the previous goal of affiliation, the association with groups and brand communities also serves the purpose of reflecting social ties from which self-concept can also be reinforced (A. Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). In this regard, empirical research supports the argument that consumers use brand choices to construct their self-identities and present themselves to others (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Ferraro, Escalas, & Bettman, 2011). Thus, engagement behaviours with brands, such as “Following” a brand presence in social media, could be also part of the construction of the self-concept, as these elements are usually displayed within the user’s online profile. Furthermore, sharing content from a certain brand would also provide elements with which to construct and present the self to others.

In conclusion, the three main goals identified in the literature as drivers of social influence are present in the context of fan brand pages in social media channels. Therefore, a social influence approach to the interactions that occur in this environment is further confirmed. The next section examines the theories that were identified in this literature review, in order to decide which one is the best fit for this research enquiry.

Section 3: Theories of social influence

2.10 Level of focus in social influence theories

The theories that explain how individuals are affected by the behaviours, cognitions and feelings of others have been examined in Section 1, based on the modality of influence that they aim to explain. At this stage, an investigation into which theory has a more robust explanatory power is out of scope of this thesis, although similarities among theories emerged in terms of seeing social influence as a result of more basic psychological needs (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). What it is more relevant to determine the fitness for this research enquiry are the determinants that they propose that wield social influence. The determinants of each of the theories presented in Table 8 differ, with some of them focusing on micro elements, such as familiarity and affective state (Forgas, 2001), attitudes (Ajzen, 1991) and consensus (Mackie, 1987), while others take into account meso levels of analysis, such as number of sources (including majority-minority relationships) (Tanford & Penrod, 1984; Bibb Latané, 1981; Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972) and other social relationships that exist between target and source (i.e. immediacy).

Table 8- Social influence theories and models

Year	Author	Theory name	Modality	Operationalisation of social influence	Level of focus	Determinants
1980	Moscovici	Conversion theory	Conformity	Consensus	Micro level	Mental processing types
1981	Latane	Social Impact Theory	Conformity	Social Impact	Meso Level	Strength, Immediacy and number of sources
1984	Tanford and Penrod	Social Influence Model	Conformity	Majority-Minority relationships	Mico and Meso Level	Transition probabilities, individual resistance, group size
1985	Turner	Self-categorisation theory	Conformity	Identification	Micro Level	Perceiver readiness, category-stimulus fit
1987	Mackie	Objective consensus approach	Conformity	Consensus	Micro Level	Objective consensus
1991	Ajzen	Theory of planned behaviour	Norms	Intentions / Behaviour	Micro Level	Attitudes, Subjective norm, PBC
1995	Forgas	Affective-infusion model	Compliance	Information processing	Micro Level	Familiarity, importance, atypical, cognitive capacity, affective state, motivation to accuracy

From the examination of the theories, it becomes evident that those that focus on micro level elements as determinants of influence are not a good fit, as they do not include variables that could resemble the ones that this research is trying to test. As discussed in Chapter 1, this research is driven by the changes that Web 2.0 and the increasing presence of brands in social media context is having on marketing practice and theory. Web 2.0 brings new forms of interactions between brand and consumers, which suggest a meso level approach to explain those interactions. Furthermore, in these environments brands are leveraging on social and physical cues to increase engagement behaviours (i.e. localising their online presence, and using social advertising to increase reach and click-through rate). Thus, further enquiry is needed into how these factors influence engagement behaviour with the brands, from a theoretical perspective. As a consequence, the theories identified as micro level theories are not a good fit for this research enquiry and should be discarded, not for their lack of explanatory power but due to their failure to capture the elements that are changing in social media environments and brand-consumer interactions. From the theories that remain, only social impact theory aggregates several meso level elements, including immediacy. Therefore this theory will be further examined in the following section to assess its robustness.

Section 4: Social impact theory

2.11 Section Introduction

This section examines social impact theory (SIT). The chapter is structured in two major sections. Section 1 examines how SIT can be applied to further understand interactions in the context of social media. In order to explain the influence of others on the behaviour, feelings and thoughts of a target, social influence theory relies in a series of three principles. Those principles are identified and developed in this section. As part of this series of principles, the theory also posits three factors that are determinants of social impact: strength, immediacy and number of sources. This section also examines the empirical evidence supporting those assertions, in order to assess their and identify any theoretical and methodological limitations that this theory might encounter. The development of the theory to date in both offline and online environments is investigated, taking as guidance the three principles suggested by SIT.

2.12 Principles of social impact theory

Social impact theory explains the changes in behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals as a result of certain factors and principles. It was developed and tested by Latané (1981) and further tested in various settings by other researchers (DeWall, Twenge, Bushman, Im, & Williams, 2010; B. Latané & Liu, 1996; Sedikides & Jackson, 1990; J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982; Bibb Latané & Wolf, 1981). The theory is grounded on the principle of interaction between people and other human beings. The basic principle of this interaction is that there is a source (or several sources) that exert an influential force on a target. The relationships that exist between these actors are represented by three main principles listed in Table 9.

Table 9- The principles of social impact theory

Principle 1: Social forces	<p>Social impact (SI) is a function of the sources' strength (S), immediacy (I) and number (N) over a target.</p> $f(SIN) = SI$
Principle 2: Psychosocial law	<p>Social impact (SI) does not grow linearly, instead there is a marginally decreasing effect represented by a power (t) of the number of sources (N) that is scaled by a constant (s).</p> $SI = sN^t ; t < 1$
Principle 3: Multiplication vs. division of impact	<p>When more than one target exists, the Social impact (SI) that a source exerts is divided between those targets.</p> $SI = f\left(\frac{1}{SIN}\right)$

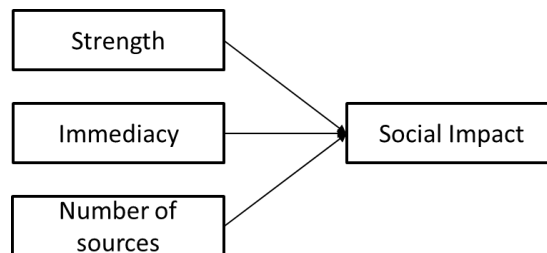
Source: Latané (1981)

2.13 Principle 1: Definition of social forces

The first principle in social impact theory distinguishes between social actors (or social forces as Latané calls them) in terms of source of influence and target of influence. From the source's side, Latané suggests that three elements will determine the impact that a source of influence may have on a target: strength, immediacy and number of sources. Those three elements of the sources of influence and can be operationalized in different forms across studies and their distinctions are analysed in this research. The multiplication (interaction) of these elements is thought to influence the target in some form of social impact. Latané (1981) identifies three dimensions in which sources can

influence their targets: at a physical, cognitive and behavioural level. The relationships level, as shown in Figure 12 in SIT can be graphically represented in the following manner as suggested by Latané:

Figure 12- Principle 1: Social forces



Adapted from Latané (1981)

In the following sub-sections, each of the elements represented in this figure is fully developed to explain its conceptual underpinnings and different representations, as well as the dimensions of influence for which there is evidence of impact by these elements.

2.13.1 Strength

The construct of strength refers to the characteristics held by a source which play a role in influencing a target, i.e. salience, importance, or intensity (Latané, 1996, 1981). These characteristics can be trans-situational or situation specific. Trans-situational characteristics are those that are relatively stable across different contexts and time. Examples of trans-situational forms of strength can be age, gender, physical characteristics, and perceived intelligence, among others. When this type of strength is identified in a source, the characteristic is assumed to be “stable”, regardless of the situation where the source is situated. The concept of strength as trans-situational has been empirically tested wide range of forms that are more diverse than Latané’s initial proposition, for instance, in the form of personality traits, social status and voice tone or the type of clothing that a source is wearing.

Studies that have tested trans-situational forms of strength are summarised in Table 10. The social impact dimensions of interest in these studies were the behavioural and cognitive outcomes. For instance, Miller and Bruiner (2008) focused on the effects of certain personality traits to operationalise strength over the number of nominations that the participants in their studies received in terms of how influential they were perceived to be. Markovsky and Thye (Markovsky & Thye, 2001) used status of the source in order to test its effect on acceptance by the target of certain paranormal beliefs. They hypothesized that, depending on the source status, a target would be more likely to conform to the source's views, even if they contradicted their initial ones. They tested the social impact that these factors would have on disseminating paranormal beliefs when a high status and credulous person would share his or her views with an incredulous one. The experiment indicated that the status of the source did, indeed, generate higher social impact, in the form of targets ranking higher beliefs in the condition when using a high status source.

Similar results were achieved by Wolf and Bugaj (Wolf & Bugaj, 1990) using status as operationalisation of a source's strength. By testing SIT in the context of witness influence in a simulated courtroom, they provided evidence that the status of the witness, as opposed to the strength of the evidence provided, proved more influential on the verdict given by the jurors in their experiments. Their experiments also suggest that it is not only the content of a person's experience that affect the perception of that content, but that other trans-situational forces (in this case social status) affect how that content is perceived and assimilated by a target individual.

From a methodological perspective, a theme that emerges from these trans-situational studies is the use of experimental settings for empirical testing. Following the initial methodological choices of Latané (1981), more recent work also has use experimental settings to test for the social impact of the factors suggested by SIT. This is true in both recent (Miller and Brunner, 2008; Markovsky and Thye, 2001) and less recent studies (Wolf and Bugaj, 1990; Williams and Williams, 1989). Although there is no explicit discussion in terms of the methodological choices of the authors, it appears that the causal nature of the enquiry, from social impact factors to social impact effects, as well as the methodological tradition of how this theory has been tested influenced their choices.

Table 10- Strength in trans-situational conditions

Year	Author	Social Impact Measured	Type of Strength	Strength
1976	Latané, B., & Harkins, S.	Cognitions (Anticipated subjective tension)	Trans-situational	Age and Gender
1981	Jackson, J. M., & Latané, B.	Behaviour (Donate money)	Trans-situational	Clothing
1989	Williams, K. D., & Williams, K. B.	Behaviour (Donate money)	Trans-situational	Clothing
1990	Wolf, S., & Bugaj, A. M.	Cognitions (Guilt judgements)	Trans-situational	Social status
1990	Sedikides C, Jackson J.	Behaviour (Compliance to request)	Trans-situational	Tone and clothing
2001	Markovsky, B., & Thye, S. R.	Cognitions (Transmission of beliefs)	Trans-situational	Status
2008	Miller, M. D., & Brunner, C.	Behaviour (Peer nominations)	Trans-situational	Personality traits

There are also situation-specific types of strength, and these take into consideration the context where the target of influence is interacting in relation to the characteristic that that specific situation is giving to the source. An example of this can be the level of stress that a target will experience from a group of people when they are considered as an audience (with strength being operationalized as the role that that the group of people is playing), compared to the same group of people in a different context.

Table 11- Strength in situation-specific conditions

Year	Author	Social Impact Measured	Type of Strength	Strength
1976	Bassett, R. L. and Latane, B.	Behaviour (Column inches devoted to a new in a newspaper)	Situation-specific	Geographical location of victims
1981	Jackson, J. M., & Latané, B.	Physical (Tension to perform on stage)	Situation-specific	Role of audience
1983	Williams, K. B., & Williams, K. D.	Behaviour (Time to call for assistance)	Situation-specific	Position of help giver
1983	Wolf, S., & Latané, B.	Behaviour (Restaurant preference)	Situation-specific	Expertise
1983	Beatty, M., & Payne, S.	Cognition (Speech anxiety)	Situation-specific	Social desirability
1989	Seta, J. J., Crisson, J. E., Seta, C. E., & Wang, M. A.	Cognition (Stage fright)	Situation-specific	Role of audience
1999	Hart, J. W., Stasson, M. F., & Karau, S. J.	Behaviour (Rating)	Situation-specific	Expertise
2001	Bourgeois, M. J., & Bowen, A.	Cognitions (Alcohol-related beliefs)	Situation-specific	Relationship with the group
2008	Pedersen, E. R., LaBrie, J. W., & Lac, A.	Behaviour (Alcohol consumption)	Situation-specific	Relationship with the group

2.13.2 Immediacy

Immediacy can be defined as the distance relationship that exists between a source and the object being communicated about, the target of this communication or the communication itself (Nowak et al., 1990). Latané (Bibb Latané, 1981) initially conceptualises immediacy as a set of related factors, summarised in closeness in space or time, as well as the absence of intervening barriers or filters and physical proximity between source and target, and clarity and richness of communication channels. From this definition and from the way immediacy has been operationalized in experiments, two main types of immediacy are identified: (1) physical and (2) time. A third type of

immediacy (social) is introduced, as it acknowledges the subjectivity of immediacy of objects, people and events. Social immediacy is defined as the degree of interpersonal similarity that exists between a source and a target (Liviatan, Trope, & Liberman, 2008). The first two typologies of immediacy are the ones that have been tested more extensively in experiments based on using SIT. This is because physical and time immediacy can indeed be ways to operationalize the likelihood of interactions between sources and targets, as well as the perceived salience of strength and number of sources.

Table 12- Operationalizing immediacy in SIT

Year	Author	Social Impact Measured	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Type of immediacy		
					Physical	Temporal	Social
1976	Basset and Latane	Article length choice	Behaviour	Experiment		•	
1981	Wolf and Latane	Audience response	Behaviour	Experiment			•
1981	Jackson and Latane	Donate money	Behaviour	Field Experiment	•		
1983	Williams and Williams	Time to call assistance	Behaviour	Experiment	•		
1983	Knowles	Learning and recall	Behaviour	Experiment	•		
1990	Sedikides and Jackson	Compliance to request	Behaviour	Experiment		•	
1999	Hart et al.	Rating	Behaviour	Experiment	•		
2001	Bourgeois and Bowen	Alcohol-related beliefs	Cognitions	Survey	•		
2001	Markovsky and Thye	Transmission of beliefs	Cognitions	Experiment			•
2005	Argo et al.	Emotions, self-presentation	Emotions	Multiple methods	•		
2005	Chidambaram and Lai	Contributions, group outcome	Behaviour	Experiment	•		
2007	Cullum and Harton	Shared attitudes	Cognitions	Survey			
2008	Miller and Brunner	Peer nomination	Behaviour	Experiment	•		•
2008	Pedersen et al.	Alcohol consumption	Behaviour	Survey	•		
2008	Blaskovich	Recall	Cognitions	Experiment	•		
2012	Bahns et al.	Attitudes	Cognitions	Survey	•		

Within studies using SIT as the underpinning theory, there is a tendency to operationalise it as physical immediacy (See Table 13). The results from these studies support Latané's theory that physical immediacy has an effect on behaviours and cognitions, at least in offline environments. For instance, Pedersen et al. (2008) found that physical proximity of college students affected the levels of alcohol consumption at university. In their study, students surrounded by other peers with higher levels of alcohol consumption were also

consuming more alcohol. Similar effects were also found by Bourgeois and Bowen (2001) with groups of friends that were physically close being more likely to shared similar beliefs compared to those that were physically more distant in other courses. Evidence regarding other forms of immediacy is more limited, with fewer studies providing supportive evidence on the effect of other forms of immediacies. For instance, in a study conducted by Sedikides and Jackson (1990), it was found that high-immediacy sources exerted higher social impact than low-immediacy sources, when immediacy was operationalised as the amount of time that passed between source-target interactions. They found that the more distant in time the interaction was, the less social impact the source had on the behaviour of the target. Evidence applied to the online context is also limited, with a focus on presence as operationalization of immediacy in empirical research testing SIT. For instance, Miller and Brunner (2008) found that in online interactions, sources of influence that are perceived to be more present are perceived as more influential among their peers. The effect of physical, temporal and social immediacy in online environments within SIT has not been tested, yet there is some evidence from other field of studies that these forms of immediacy also exert social impact at multidimensional levels. This is further discussed in Section 3 of this chapter.

2.13.3 Number of sources

The third element in the principle of social forces in SIT relates to the number of sources exerting influence. The theory suggests that as the number of sources of influence increases, this will have a multiplying effect on the final impact. From the other two factors (i.e. strength and immediacy), the number of sources only is operationalized as the numerical value of sources of influence. However, this factor has been extensively studied in social psychology literature as a determinant of influence. For instance, during the initial studies on conformity conducted by Asch (1951) he found that the number where individuals tended to conform more to the views of others was when the majority numbered three. In his experiments, whenever the number of sources increased further, no increase in conformity could be found. However, this view is challenged by several other authors, including Latané and Wolf (1981) and Tanford and Penrod (1984), both suggesting that even though the impact of the majority does not follow a linear function, which would mean that as the number in a majority increases the power that they exert

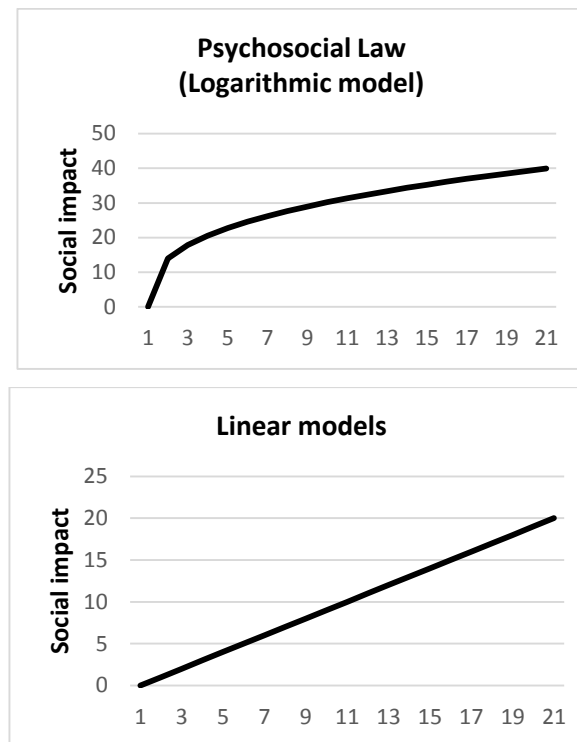
on a minority would be greater, conformity in the form of the influence of a majority does not stop increasing once the number in the group reaches three. Instead, a negative accelerated power function is believed to be more representative on the effect of group size. This leads to the second supporting principle of this theory, a psychosocial law proposed by Latane (1981) where the amount of social impact (I) equals some power (t) of the number of sources (N) times a scaling constant (s).

2.14 Principle 2: the psychosocial law in SIT

The second principle of SIT relies on what Latané conceptualises as a type of psychosocial law. Derived from Stevens' (1975) psychophysical law, SIT suggests that the impact does not increase infinitely in a linear manner, but instead there is a marginally decreasing effect as more sources of influence are taken into account from a specific target. Psychophysical laws were used to portray relationships between a physical stimulus and its perceived intensity or strength. In Latané's formulation, this amount of social impact experienced by someone is equal to a power (t) of the number of sources (N), times a scaling constant (s).

Figure 13- Representing the psychosocial law: logarithmic vs. linear models.

$$SI = sN^t ; t < 1$$



Adapted from: Latané (1981)

This view contrasts with Asch's (1951, 1952, and 1956) assertion that the social impact grew until the influencing group numbered three. This second principle is more descriptive than predictive, as the power (t) can only be calculated once the social impact is known and not before. For this reason, some authors (Mullen, 1986, 1985) have extensively criticised the principle and from all the studies reviewed in the literature only few included it in their empirical tests.

2.15 Principle 3: multiplication vs. division of impact

The final principle in SIT relates to the inverse relation between source and target. The psychosocial law states that as a greater number of sources are part of the influence "force field" of a target, the impact of the multiplicative effect of Strength, Immediacy and

Number of sources will not be linear. Conversely, as more targets of influence enter into a force field, the impact is also divided between those targets.

$$SI = f\left(\frac{1}{SIN}\right)$$

Source: Latané, (1981)

As in the case of the second principle, very few studies actually tested for this relationship, although in this case it was for a different reason. Empirical studies that tested for the impact of a source of a target, tended to focus only on the first principle, as the interaction was unidirectional (i.e. only from source to target, and not vice versa). Interactive models (such as dynamic social impact theory, which is developed later in this section) dismissed this principle by assigning probabilities that these interactions would occur.

Despite the extensive work conducted to test social impact theory, a limitation of the model with the 3 principles proposed by Latané (1981) is that they do not account for the dynamic element of human interaction. This shortcoming was later addressed by Latané to account for these dynamic effects in groups through a dynamic social impact theory (Bibb Latané, 1996).

2.16 Dynamic social impact theory

Dynamic social impact theory is developed to account for the dynamic nature of human interactions. The theory expands the principles proposed by SIT, and in fact still uses the three main factors of social impact (strength, immediacy and number of sources). Dynamic social impact theory posits that coherent structures of cultural elements emerge from the interactions of people located in space (Latané, 1996), Latané suggests that there is a tendency for people to be more influenced by nearby rather than far away people. The literature also suggests that this proximity (spatial or not, as discussed in section 3.2.2) impacts on the degree of interaction that an individual has and contributes towards the building of strong or weak ties with the sources (Granovetter, 1973). This effect gives

rise to local patterns of consensus in attitudes, values, practices, identities and meanings that can be interpreted as subcultures or subgroups, where majorities influence minorities, and as a consequence of this, groupings start to emerge, and within those groups views are shared and elements of *homophily* start to be present, allowing the diffusion of views to continue (Latané, 1996).

From experiments and simulations, studies based on DSITY found out that as groups start to form, four types of self-organisation emerge, as summarised in the Table 13, based on the five principles that underpin dynamic social impact theory: (1) individuals differ, (2) individuals have a stable location in space, (3) social impact is subject to the three forces described in social impact theory (strength, immediacy and number of sources), (4) iterative interaction of individuals will lead to the self-organisation of the group, and (5) social impact will be incremental for unimportant issues and catastrophic for important ones.

Table 13- Types of self-organisation according to dynamic social impact theory

Type	Examples
Clustering	As people adopt the positions of their neighbours in social space, groups should become clustered, but only if there are enough people in the initial minority to self-organise.
Correlation	To the extent that clusters on various issues in the conformity game overlap, correlations among different, originally unrelated issues should emerge. Correlations in this experiment were greater the greater the degree of clustering and the size of the surviving minority subgroup.
Consolidation	Choices should also become consolidated as people in the minority, being more exposed to opposition than those in the majority, convert, reducing the diversity of positions.
Continuing diversity	Clustering can force groups to preserve a continuing diversity of opinion, despite the fact that everyone is trying to adopt the majority position. This is because as a consequence of clustering, an illusory local majority influences the choice in the conformity game, and therefore diversity is secured.

Source: Latané (1996)

2.17 Section conclusion

This thesis draws on Latané's Social Impact theory rather than other theories and models of social influence as SIT is able to "accommodate a variety of group composition variables" (Muller, 1985; p. 234). SIT, in its first principle, manages to fit variables that relate to both the sources' characteristics, the perception of those characteristics by the target, as well as to the variety of dimensions in terms of relationships that can exist between sources and targets. A source's characteristics are deemed important to determine the social impact that that source can wield. These characteristics are the focus of the non-systematic processes identified in the objective consensus approach as discussed in Chapter 2, and in social impact theory these characteristics are manifest in the different forms of strength previously discussed. In addition to this, SIT brings elements of group minorities and majorities that are also accounted for in several other theories (i.e. self-categorisation theory, social influence model, consensus theory) by including the effect of the variable of number of sources in the first principle as well as the second and third principles. In addition to this, these theories ignore the

characteristics of the sources of influence, such as age and gender in relation to the target of influence. These theories do not account for the social relationships that exist between sources in different contexts, either. In addition, the conceptualisation of SIT is such that it allows flexibility when operationalizing it, and still provides a strong significance across this range of diverse variables. This has allowed the theory to be tested in different offline contexts, but also to prove its predictive power in an online environment (M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008) and in computer simulations (Bibb Latané, 1996; Bibb Latané & L'Herrou, 1996).

Another element that supports the strength of SIT over other social influence perspectives is that other social influence models and theories assume a pattern of connectivity across actors that represent an “all-connected network” (when each node is connected to all of the other nodes), “grid networks” (when nodes form connection only to a certain other nodes) or “dynamic networks (where nodes connections are connected to certain others but these connections can change over time). While most of the theories identified in the review have been tested with only one of these assumptions, SIT and DSIT have shown the adaptability to perform in any of those patterns (Mason et al., 2007).

From the review of how SIT has developed in social psychology literature, it was noted that research on the effect of source immediacy has focused only on one form of immediacy, with no empirical studies looking at the effect of more than one form of immediacy within the same context. In addition, studies looking at this social influence factor in online environments are also limited, with a focus on presence as operationalization and a disregard of other forms of immediacy. Based on these findings, the following section evaluates how immediacy has been tested in online environments outside SIT.

Section 5: Immediacy as a determinant of social impact

2.18 Section introduction

This section argues for the need to further measure the effect of immediacy as an element of social impact in online environments through a more systematic approach. All the elements of SIT have now been introduced and as can be seen in Table 12 a tendency to operationalise mostly as physical immediacy. Yet an immediacy relationship between a target and a source can be beyond the physical realm. In fact, other types of immediacy have also been studied both within SIT and beyond this theory, giving temporal and social immediacy a relevant place as determinants of human behaviour (Liberman, 2007; Bar-Anan et al., 2006; Fujita et al., 2006; Liberman et al., 2002).

Two limitations from research in the field have been identified, as shown in Table 12. The first limitation is that immediacy within SIT has been tested using only one form of immediacy per study, which limits our understanding of how these different forms of immediacies determines behaviour. Construal Level Theory suggests that different forms of immediacies are perceived in similar ways by individuals and that changes in one affect changes in others. This means that issues occurring at a physically distant place will also be perceived as socially distant, which in turn are perceived as less likely to affect the target, eliciting more abstract mental processing and thus reducing their impact (Nira Liberman, Sagristano, & Trope, 2002). This evidence supporting Construal Level Theory also suggests that more research is needed into SIT, and in particular how different forms of immediacies operate within this theory.

The second limitation of current studies using immediacy is that evidence of its validity in online environments is limited. This thesis will address these gaps by providing empirical evidence of the effects of different forms of immediacies on people's behaviour within the online context. The following section will examine how immediacy and its effects have been conceptualised and empirically tested within the online environment. Although the focus of this research is social media, this section will summarise evidence from all kinds of online environments, as empirical evidence from social media only is limited.

2.19 Immediacy, distance and proximity

This section aims to clarify the relationships that exist between three concepts that are central to this thesis. Firstly, a definition of what is *immediacy* is needed, as this construct is a key element for this research that tests its effect over certain behaviour in a particular social media setting. For this reason, this section starts by defining the construct and examining the range of definitions that can be found in the literature to finally come up with a working definition one. Then other concepts that are closely related to the construct of immediacy will also be discussed, with a focus on the definition of *distance*, as well as the different forms that distance can manifest and also the concept of *proximity*.

Immediacy is defined as the distance relationship that exist between a source and target of influence, and within Social Impact theory, this consideration of this distance relationship has been biased towards physical distance only (Bibb Latané, 1996). Other definitions outside social psychology seem to take a similarly biased approach. For instance, Mehrabian (Mehrabian, 1967) defines immediacy as the degree of perceived physical and/or psychological closeness between people. This view of immediacy as the physical distance relationship between two interacting entities appears to be widely shared in the educational field, as well (J. D. Baker, 2004; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995). However, despite this focus on physical distance as the operationalisation of immediacy, distances are inherently perceived by a source and a target, and therefore operationalisation in terms of psychological distance would be more appropriate. Advances in the conceptualisation of distances support this argument.

In the field of social psychology, Trope and Liberman's Construal Level Theory (Trope & Liberman, 2010) has made good progress in widening the conceptualisation of *distance* and providing supporting evidence that psychological distance is more relevant than physical distance. Construal Level Theory (CLT) uses psychological distance to explain how people perceive objects (or persons) at different construal levels, which in turn affects how those objects are being evaluated. Although CLT is not a theory that directly relates to *distances* or *immediacy*, this theory contends that people use increasingly higher levels of construals to represent an object as the psychological distance of that object

increases (NiraTrope Liberman, 2007). CLT identifies four types of distances: spatial, temporal, social, and hypothetical. Liberman (2010) posits that these distances are interrelated, as they all possess an underlying common meaning, even when they are not directly related to a particular goal.

If *immediacy* refers to the distance relationship that exists between two interacting agents, and there are more forms of distance than only the spatial (physical) one, the concept of proximity that closely relates with these two constructs needs to be examined and differentiated.

The concept of *proximity* shares many similarities with the one of *distance*, which was previously discussed in this section and is usually used to express the geographical distance between people and objects measured in units (e.g. inches, metres, miles, etc.) (Knoben & Oerlemans, 2006). Yet *proximity* can be understood as a wider concept, and the richness in conceptualisations within the literature is a reflection of this. For instance, proximity relates to other concepts such as physical distance, collocation, and dispersion (Monge & Kirste, 1980). Furthermore, in the wider literature the concept of proximity has been investigated from institutional (Kirat & Lung, 1999), organisational (Meister & Werker, 2004), cultural (Gill & Butler, 2003) and social (Bradshaw, 2001) perspectives. Despite this richness in conceptualisation of this concept (which can be appreciated from Knoben and Oerlemans' review on proximity found in the literature, represented in Table 14 below), not all of these conceptualisations are relevant for the scope of this thesis' research, and therefore will not be discussed at this stage. Instead this thesis will only focus on the ones that share similarities with the types of distance suggested by Construal Level Theory: geographical, social and temporal.

Table 14- Type of proximities found in literature

Type of Proximity							
Literature Search	Geographical	Organisational	Cultural	Technological	Temporal	Institutional	Social
Proximity, organisation and innovation	35	9	3	3	2	3	3
Proximity and regional development	19	0	1	0	0	0	1
Proximity and collaboration	19	2	1	1	1	0	2
Overlapping papers	7	2	1	0	1	0	1

Source: (Knoben & Oerlemans, 2006)

Geographical proximity refers to the territorial, spatial, local or physical proximity between two interacting agents (dyadic distance) or as group of agents in a geographical unit (agglomeration) (Knoben & Oerlemans, 2006). Social proximity refers to agents that belong to a similar space of relations (Oerlemans, Meeus, & Boekema, 2001). Temporal proximity refers to how distant in time an event appears to be to an agent (Nira Liberman et al., 2002) and how this affects their perception of risk, preference, and attractiveness of choices (Savadori & Mittone, 2015). Other authors use similar conceptualisations such as personal proximity (Schamp, Rentmeister, & Lo, 2004), or relational proximity (Coenen, Moodysson, & Asheim, 2004). A commonality that can be found in the studies on proximity is that they posit that proximity positively affects relationships and interactions (Hinds & Kiesler, 2002).

After reviewing these interrelated concepts, this thesis concludes that an appropriate operationalisation of immediacy should include other forms of psychological distances, and not be limited to physical ones. Working from the conceptualisation provided by CLT, and the empirical support that seems to confirm the existence of all these forms of psychological distance, this thesis develops a working definition of immediacy as the psychological distance relationships, physical, social, temporal and probabilistic, that exist between a source and a target of influence.

2.20 Immediacy in online environments

The forms of immediacy, physical immediacy, temporal immediacy, and social immediacy manifest themselves differently in online environments, as the cues of the source's location, synchronicity of the interaction, and the manifestation of presence change when interactions occur in this context (J. D. Baker, 2004; Olson & Olson, 2000). This section further develops the concept of immediacy in online environments, and it is organised around the forms of immediacies identified in Section 1: physical, temporal, and social.

2.20.1 Physical immediacy in online environments

Empirical evidence from studies in computer-mediated environments has shown that physical immediacy affects behaviour in similar ways as in offline environments. Olson and Olson (Olson & Olson, 2000) reviewed 10 years of empirical research in the field of group collaboration in computer-mediated communication and offline environments. They argue that, despite the fact that computers and online environments allow users to interact regardless of their physical location, physical immediacy among other elements persists in being an important factor in determining an outcome of an interaction. This is due to the effects of differences in the local physical context, time zones, culture, and language still persist, even when technology allows physical immediacy to be less relevant in order to interact with other people. Evidence supporting this view has been provided in different fields. For instance, Bradner and Mark (2002) found, in a series of experiments, that interactions performed via computer-mediated communication technology were affected by the geographical immediacy of the subjects. In their study, subjects in physically close locations had higher levels of cooperation, were perceived as more persuasive and elicited less levels of deception compared to subjects that were believed to be in distant locations. Similar outcomes were observed in the empirical studies included in Olson and Olson's (2000) review: collaboration between groups and group performance were lower when interactions occurred using online environments than when these interactions were face-to-face.

Thus, physical immediacy appears to affect behaviour in a similar manner in online interactions. However evidence also suggest that this phenomena can be moderated by frequency of interactions. The studies of Bradner and Mark (2002) on cooperation, persuasion and deception found that despite the fact there were significant differences in these variables between online and offline interaction, these differences were not significant after a number of interactions. Similar results were obtained by Moon (Moon, 1999) with a negative relationship between perceived physical immediacy and persuasion in computer-mediated interaction.

2.20.2 Temporal immediacy in online environments

Temporal immediacy refers to the time of the perceiver in relation to the perceived target time, regardless of past or future (Bar-Anan et al., 2007, Shen and Chiou, 2010 and Trope and Liberman, 2003). The more distant in time an event is perceived to be, the less social impact these events will convey to the target. For instance, Basset and Latané (1976), in empirical tests, found that events that occurred long in the past or in the far off future presented less social impact than temporal proximate ones in the decisions made by editors to determine size and word length of news. A complementary theory regarding the effects that temporal immediacy has on cognitive processes and behaviour is Construal Level Theory. Liberman and Trope (1998) found that distant future activities were described in terms of abstract, superordinate goals ('why' terms), whereas near future activities were described in terms of subordinate goals ('how' terms). This leads to different prioritisation in the mental processing and can explain the different outcomes predicted by SIT.

Several studies in a diverse range of fields support the claim that temporal immediacy of events impact behaviour, cognitions and emotions, as SIT suggests. Empirical research in offline environments suggests that temporal immediacy of future events systematically changes people's responses to those events (Nira Liberman et al., 2002). Furthermore, research in behavioural economics has found that future outcomes typically undergo discounting at a rate that is steeper than would be justified by purely economic considerations (Frederick, Loewenstein, & O'Donoghue, 2001; Loewenstein & Prelec,

1992). Likewise, research on decision making has shown that people often take more risk and feel more confident about the more distant future (Gilovich, Kerr, & Medvec, 1993; Nisan, 1972) and research on delayed gratification and self-control has shown that both humans and animals are better able to delay gratification with respect to distant future outcomes than near future outcomes (Ainslie, 1975; Mischel, 1974; Rachlin, 1995; Trope & Fishbach, 2000).

Research into the effects of temporal immediacy on social impact in online environments has also shown similar effects. For instance, temporal proximity of events reflects on aspects of attachment to, membership in, and departure from a certain event in the context of immediacy learning (Haythornthwaite, Kazmer, Robins, & Shoemaker, 2006). This study found that even when interactions were occurring in online environments, the temporal proximity generated by “live” events as opposed to recorded ones resulted in a better experience and more engagement from the participants of immediacy learning courses. Temporal proximity in synchronous interactions also has a positive effect in the outcome of teamwork (Darleen and De Rosa, 2004).

However empirical evidence on the impact of temporal immediacy in the context of social media is still very limited. Lim et al. (Lim, Cha, Park, Lee, & Kim, 2012) found that reducing temporal distance in social media can enhance users’ co-experience in video streaming platforms, and to the knowledge of this researcher no empirical testing has been done in online environments using temporal immediacy as determinant of social impact. Yet the results from all the other fields may suggest that similar outcomes can be expected in this environment.

2.20.3 Social immediacy in online environments

Social immediacy refers to the perceived similarity with those around us, with similar others being perceived as socially closer to oneself than dissimilar ones (e.g., Heider, 1958, Miller et al., 1998 and Tesser, 1988). Online environments allow us to modify or hide those elements that can help targets determine closeness. Thus, social immediacy

can be manipulated to allow individuals to choose what kind of information is disclosed to others (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2005). This ability to manipulate social immediacy can also be used by brands and other stakeholders to leverage on the decisions of other users that are close to a given target. For example, content in web articles or playlists in social media sites that rely on video content display a rating of the popularity that a given content had with other users who are socially close to the client. For this reason, it appears to be crucial to further understand the implications of these constant changes in the form immediacy manifest in this medium in order to understand its full effect as a social impact factor.

Miller and Brunner (M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008) performed a series of experiments to determine if the social impact factors suggested by SIT wielded the same influence when this interaction was conducted through computer-mediated communication channels. Their results showed that elements of strength (operationalised in the form of perceived assertiveness and exaggeration) as well as the source's immediacy (using the total number of contributions and length of those contributions as operants) were significant predictors of perceived directive and positive/negative influence.

A source's immediacy is therefore in a constant state of change in online environments, depending on the explicit willingness of the user to manipulate its immediacy, and limited by the capabilities that each website gives to its users in order to manipulate it. Efforts to prove the effects of immediacy on individual behaviour are extensive, both within SIT (M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008; Argo et al., 2005; Sedikides & Jackson, 1990; J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982; Bibb Latané & Wolf, 1981) and within other social influence paradigms (Blaskovich, 2008; J. D. Baker, 2004; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; Christophel & Gorham, 1995). Despite the fact that most of the studies operationalised immediacy in the form of physical, temporal and social immediacy; they focus only on one form of immediacy, and, as argued in the previous section, the three forms of immediacy suggested in SIT can be manipulated in online environments and social media websites are increasingly allowing their users to modify them for both business interest and to improve the consumer's experience. In addition, immediacy in offline environments is also being manipulated at the same time. Interactions occur at geographical immediacy, with people socially close or distant to us and within a time

continuum. However, online environments provide platforms where these interactions can not only be manipulated, but also can be studied. This provides a great opportunity to systematically study the effects of all these three forms of immediacy within the same context, providing evidence of their effects on consumer behaviour. A gap is thus identified in terms of testing the effects of these different forms of immediacy within the same context.

2.21 Telepresence

Telepresence is a concept that originated in virtual reality research as a consequence of computer-mediated interactions (Hyun & O’Keefe, 2012). Telepresence is defined as the feeling of “being there” (Steuer, 1992), and although the study of this concept originated in virtual reality research, any medium is able to generate telepresence (Shih, 1998; Suh and Chang, 2006). Thus, telepresence relies on how closely computer-mediated experiences simulate real-world interaction with a product or person (Shih, 1998). Therefore, telepresence is a related concept, as an element that is perceived to “be there” will be an element that is also perceived to be close in immediacy, and consequently yield higher social impact.

Research in telepresence conceptualises it as a mediating construct affecting individuals’ cognitive, behavioural and emotional elements. For instance, Klein (2003), Griffith and Chen (2004) and Cho et al. (2002) demonstrate that to some extent the degree of digitalised information determines the degree of telepresence, which in turn influences attitudes and behavioural intentions. Furthermore, Schlosser’s (2003) study shows that 3-D-based, interactive information has a greater effect on attitudes than, for instance, Web-based video. Griffith and Chen’s (2004) study supports the possibility of different effects of virtual information by discovering that the degree of digitalisation (high, medium and low) influences attitude and intention differently. Klein (2003) finds that the more interactive and richer the increase in information from 2-D- or text-based information to 3-D-based, full-motion video and audio, the higher the telepresence. Higher telepresence then results in stronger attitudes toward a product. Research into websites and consumer behaviour, such as that of Fiore et al. (2005), Hopkins, Raymond, and Mitra (2002) and

Suh and Chang (2006), confirms the mediating role of telepresence in information processing, cognitive responses, and Web purchase intention.

2.22 Interactivity

The concept of interactivity can be broadly defined as “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of the mediated environment in real time” (Steuers, 1992). Studies in interactivity can take a mechanistic or experiential approach (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Mechanistic views of interactivity see it as the response to the structural properties of the online medium or website, “the hardwired opportunity of interactivity provided during an interaction” (Liu and Shrum, 2002, p.55). An experiential approach focuses on perceived interactivity (McMillan and Hwang, 2002), defining it as “a psychological state experienced by a site user during his or her interaction with the website” (Wu, 2006, p.91), implicitly taking into account the cognitive processing and involvement in the activity.

This distinction between mechanistic and experiential approaches better matches the empirical findings, noted by McMillan and Hwang (2002) and Song and Zinkhan (2008), that there is no relationship between the provision of interactive features in a website and consumers’ appreciation of interactivity. This distinction also explains why, in some cases, interactivity has a detrimental effect on consumer attitudes to websites, since it can support the notion that some consumers are resistant to levels of interactivity that make excessively time-consuming demands on cognitive processing (Liu and Shrum, 2005). Some studies (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Song and Zinkhan, 2008; Wu, 2006; Yadav and Varadajan, 2005) reach a degree of consensus on the core dimensions of perceived interactivity: perceived user control; two-way communication; and perceived responsiveness.

2.23 Product involvement and social influence

Product involvement refers to the extent to which a consumer perceives a product to be important (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The concept of product involvement has been extensively studied as a factor moderating purchase decisions (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Clarke & Belk, 1979; J. B. Cohen, 1983; Drossos, Kokkinaki, Giaglis, & Fouskas, 2014); product development (Lagrosen, 2005); the evaluation of brand attributes and preference (Zaichkowsky, 1985) as well as of advertising (Zaichkowsky, 1994). In the online context, product involvement has been found to positively affect website loyalty (H.-C. Wang, Pallister, & Foxall, 2006), intentions to interact with a website (Yoo & Stout, 2001) and click behaviour on online advertisement (Cho, 2003). In addition, some authors suggest that it can also affect the level of engagement with a brand in social media settings (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). There is some evidence that suggest that the level of involvement is likely to affect the level of compliance to certain requests. For example, Dolinski et al. (Dolinski, Nawrat, & Rudak, 2001) found that high involvement topics tend to be processed more actively than low involvement ones.

There are two types of involvement: affective and cognitive. Cognitive involvement happens when a consumer is looking to think about and process information related to their object of involvement (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2012). An example of this type of involvement can be a consumer that is fan of a movie saga such as Star Wars or The Hunger Games, and time is spent learning about the story behind, the characters traits and other details about the film. On the other hand, affective involvement refers to the state in which consumers expend emotional energy and generate feelings about an offering, activity or decision (Hoyer et al., 2012). Fans of certain musicians that develop deep feelings towards them are a good example of this type of involvement.

2.24 Section conclusion

SIT has been tested in both social psychology (DiFonzo et al., 2013; Doohwang Lee et al., 2011; DeWall et al., 2010; Miller and Brunner, 2008; Pedersen et al., 2008; Latané and L'Herrou, 1996; Latané, 1996; Jackson and Latané, 1982) and marketing literature

(Kwahk & Ge, 2012; Naylor et al., 2012), resulting in supportive evidence that in any given situation at least one of the social forces proposed by the theory (strength, immediacy and number of sources) affects consumers' behaviour.

From the social forces identified in the theory, immediacy is a multi-dimensional construct that affects consumer behaviours (Jeffrey M. Jackson, 1986; Mullen, 1985; J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982). Different types of immediacies can exist between source and target, and can be categorised in terms of physical, temporal and social immediacies. To date, the different types of immediacies suggested in this theory have been tested empirically in a range of offline and online settings (Blaskovich, 2008; M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008; Pedersen et al., 2008; Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001; Hart, Stasson, & Karau, 1999; J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982; Bassett & Latane, 1976) and through computer simulations (Fink, 1996; Bibb Latané & L'Herrou, 1996; Bibb Latané, Liu, Nowak, Bonevento, & Zheng, 1995; B. Latané & Liu, 1996).

The evidence from these studies suggest that the immediacy of a source can affect the impact that this source has on the target at behavioural (Chidambaram & Lai Lai Tung, 2005; M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008; Pedersen et al., 2008) and cognitive (Blaskovich, 2008; Argo et al., 2005; Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001; Knowles, 1983) levels. Despite the efforts to test the effect of a source's immediacy on a target, this has always been carried out using only one form of immediacy as the explaining variable for changes in behaviour. However, interactions between sources and targets occur in an environment where more than one form of immediacy is affecting the target at the same time, especially when these interactions occur in internet-mediated environments. For this reason, this research aims to provide evidence of how different immediacies affect behaviour in the context of social media.

Chapter 3: Consumer engagement behaviours

3.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter critically evaluates the empirical evidence regarding consumer engagement behaviours. The chapter examines the concepts of engagement and consumer engagement behaviours within the academic literature, as this is the focus on which social impact theory is being tested. This chapter starts by examining the different perspectives from which the construct has been examined in a wide range of social sciences literature, as well as in management and marketing literature. This also helps to determine how the construct has evolved in its conceptualisation, as well as to identify similar constructs that might require further delimitation. This chapter also reviews the different forms in which consumer engagement is operationalised in the literature.

The chapter then examines if social influence forces can relate to consumer engagement behaviours. This will be done by reviewing the empirical studies that suggest that social impact forces apply to the interactions that occur in this environment. A focus will be given once again to immediacy, as the central construct of this thesis, and its relationships with consumer engagement behaviour. The chapter continues by assessing the different manifestations of consumer engagement behaviour in the context of social media, and the different behaviours that can be performed on the social networking site Facebook are identified and examined. This section concludes by developing the research propositions that will be examined in this thesis based on the behaviours identified.

Section 1: Engagement

3.2 Engagement in the wider literature

The concept of engagement is studied from different perspectives in the academic literature. This section examines these perspectives in order to locate the working definition of consumer engagement used in this thesis, which is given in the following section. Using the work of Ilic (2008), Brodie et al. (Brodie et al., 2011) and Hollebeek (2011) as frame of reference, a review is conducted of how engagement is studied in

other social sciences, in order to define the degree to which the concept has been developed in these areas, and subsequently contrast it with its development in marketing and communications literature.

Other social sciences have conceptualised engagement as a multidimensional concept that is manifest in behavioural, emotional and cognitive manners (Table 15). In this regard, Hollebeek (2011) points out that, across these fields, the interactive nature of engagement is stated explicitly or implicitly in the conceptualisations and dimensionality of the studies. For instance, for Mor et al. (Mor et al., 1995), social engagement relates to “the ability to take advantage of opportunities for social interaction and to initiate actions that engage in the life at the home”. Their view on engagement is that it is part of the human social nature, and as such, the lack of it results in a lower quality of life and enjoyment. One of the components that they posit as a manifestation of engagement is “ease to interact with others”, thus suggesting a behavioural and interactive nature of the state of engagement. This way of seeing engagement appears to be widespread in psychology research. For example, Tsai et al. (C.-F. Tsai et al., 2009) also looked at the interactive nature of engagement and its relationship with negative psychological states when it is not present. The manifestations of engagement that were measured such as “the ease interacting with others” or “acceptance of invitations to group activities” also point towards the interactive nature between the source and target of engagement (Tsai et al., 2009).

Another example of the interactive nature of engagement comes from the organisational behaviour literature. The concept of occupational engagement, as developed by Bejerholm and Eklund (2006, p.21) involves the “ability to move around society and interact socially” with dimensions related to the social environment and social interplay as central elements of the concept.

Table 15- The concept of engagement in social sciences

Discipline	Concept	Author(s)	Definition	Themes/dimensionality
Sociology	Civic engagement	(Jennings & Zeitner, 2003)	Behaviours & attitudes regarding quasi-political processes/ Institutions	Multidimensional: 1. Media attentiveness 2. Trust 3. Political involvement
Psychology	Social engagement	Achterberg et al. (2003); Tsai et al. (2009)	A high sense of initiative, involvement & adequate response to social stimuli, participating in social activities, interacting with others	Multidimensional: 1. Ease of interacting with others 2. Ease of doing planned/structural activities 3. Ease of doing self-initiated activities 4. Establishing own goals 5. Pursuing involvement 6. Acceptance of invitations to group activities
Educational psychology	Student engagement	(Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004)	The multifaceted nature of student engagement exists in the following dimensions: (a) cognitive, e.g. willingness to master certain skills; (b) emotional, e.g. positive/negative reactions to teachers; & (c) behavioural, i.e. participation (e.g. in academic/extracurricular activity)	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioural
	Student engagement	London et al. (2007)	A student's level of academic investment, motivation & commitment with their institution, perceived psychological connection, comfort & sense of belonging toward their institution	Multidimensional: 1. Academic investment 2. Academic motivation 3. Commitment to institution 4. Perceived psychological connection to institution 5. Comfort with institution 6. Sense of belonging to institution
Organizational Behaviour	Occupational Engagement	Bejerholm and Eklund (2006)	A lifestyle characteristic including the external/objective & internal/subjective aspects of occupational performance, which involves both anticipation & comprehension of these, and serves as the basis for an ongoing, cyclical means of maintaining a sense of self & well-being	Multidimensional: 1. Daily rhythm (activity/rest) 2. Occupational variety/range 3. Place 4. Social environment 5. Social interplay 6. Interpretation 7. Extent of meaningful occupations 8. Routines 9. Initiating performance
	Employee engagement	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind [and work related activities]	Multidimensional: 1. Absorption 2. Dedication 3. Vigour

Compiled from Illic (2008), Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek (2011)

Some researchers argue for a conceptualisation of engagement at behavioural, cognitive and emotional levels. For instance, in educational psychology, Fredericks et al. (2004) argue that for the concept of student engagement, the fusion of behavioural, cognitive and emotional dimensions provides a richer conceptualisation of the construct, as studying it individually would mean separating and studying these dimensions individually, which is rarely the case in human behaviour. They argue that these dimensions are dynamically interrelated, as opposed of isolated processes. In Table 16 all the different definitions from within this field are presented to show how the different manifestations that the concept can have depend on the dimension from which is being studied.

3.2.1 Behavioural engagement

Behavioural engagement is most commonly defined in three ways. The first one is through positive conduct, such as following the rules or classroom norms, as well as the absence of negative behaviours (Finn, 1993; Finn and Rock, 1997). Another behavioural definition within this literature relates to the degree of involvement that someone can have towards a specific action, in this context, learning and other academic tasks can be manifest in the form of persistence, concentration or contribution to class discussions (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Finn et al., 1995). Another common definition involves participation in school-related activities. A comparison with these manifestations when they are applied in the context of marketing and communication literature will be conducted in the following section.

3.2.2 Emotional engagement

The concept of emotional engagement is defined in terms of the affective reactions in the classroom, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness and anxiety (Skinner and Belmont, 1995). Others defined emotional engagement in terms of identification with the school (Finn, 1989). The concept of identification is also related emotional engagement by Finn (1989) in terms of belonging (feeling important to the engagement object) and value (an appreciation of success in outcomes of focal engagement objects). Within the emotional engagement literature in this field, the concept of value also emerges. For

instance Eccles et al. (1983) suggest four components of value: interest (or enjoyment of the activity), attainment value (related to the importance of performing well on a task to confirm aspects of identity), utility value (importance of the task to accomplish future goals) and cost (negative aspects of engaging in a certain activity).

3.2.3 Cognitive engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to the active use of previous knowledge and the intentional creation of complex knowledge structures through the process of integration of new information and previous knowledge (Greene, 2015). The concept is rooted in the education literature, which looks for example at shallow levels of cognitive engagement when students focus on memorising content. Understanding the processes of cognitive engagement are important because they are linked with higher grades and better performance in standardised tests (Ladd & Dinella, 2009; Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Evidence suggest a direct relationship between emotional engagement and cognitive engagement, where reduced emotional engagement causing decline in cognitive engagement too (M.-T. Wang & Eccles, 2012; M.-T. Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Table 16- Behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement in educational psychology literature

<i>Type of engagement</i>	<i>Definitions</i>
<i>Behavioural engagement</i>	Positive conduct
	Involvement
	Participation
<i>Emotional engagement</i>	Affective reactions
	Identification
	Value
<i>Cognitive engagement</i>	Investment in learning
	Motivations to learn

Adapted from Fredericks et al. (2004)

The definitions summarised in Table 16 are from the context of educational psychology and student engagement. However, this recognition of the tri-dimensionality of the concept of engagement is also reflected both explicitly and implicitly in the other fields that investigate engagement. For instance, Jennings and Zeitner (2003) identify media attentiveness (cognitive), trust (emotional), and political involvement (behaviour) dimensions for civic engagement. However, there is no common agreement on measuring the three dimensions. For example, in London et al. (2007) ‘student engagement’ dimensions were focused only on cognitive (academic investment, academic motivation and commitment to institution) and emotional (perceived connection, comfort and sense of belonging) manifestations. The following section will discuss engagement from the marketing and communication literature, in order to compare whether similar themes emerge when contextualising to this field of study.

3.3 Definitions and theoretical perspectives: engagement in marketing and communications literature

The interest in the concept of *consumer engagement* among marketing academics and practitioners keeps increasing. A recent survey found that marketing practitioners rank consumer engagement as one of the top priorities of online marketing activities (eMarketer, 2013c; Calder et al., 2009). More recently, consumer engagement has also interested management and marketing academics as a subject of study (Brodie et al., 2011; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Among the reasons behind this interest are that consumer engagement is associated with consumer trust (Hollebeek, 2011), satisfaction and loyalty (Bowden, 2009) and commitment (Chan and Li, 2010), all of them strong indicators of long-term sales, word-of-mouth and brand advocacy.

Within the marketing and communication literature, the concept of engagement is rooted in five contextual dimensions: consumer engagement, customer engagement, advertising engagement, media engagement and general engagement (Rossella C Gambetti, 2010). Customer engagement, from a practitioners view, takes the perspective of the organisation, defining it as all the activities that facilitate "repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer has in a brand"

(Sedley, 2010, p. 7). Hence, most practitioners' literature suggests that customer engagement is measured using behavioural parameters. Thus, involvement is measured in terms of time spent on a website, interaction in terms of clicks, online transactions and likes; intimacy by conducting qualitative analysis of sentiment of comments and product reviews; and influence is measured by awareness, loyalty and repurchase (Haven and Vittal, 2008).

Consumer engagement can occur between a consumer and a firm but also among consumers only, depending on the platforms where the process is occurring. For instance Van Doorn et al. (2010) see engagement as a behavioural manifestation with a focus on a brand or a firm that goes beyond purchase. Latest definitions have broadened the scope of this process to include not only the consumer-firm relationships but also accounting for consumer-to-consumer interactions (Brodie et al., 2011). As a consequence, depending on the context in which engagement is occurring, the actors will change, as well as the dynamics of the interactions and the motivations to be part of this process. For example, many consumer-to-consumer engagements occur in blogs and forums that are not controlled by the brand/firm but that relate to them. As Solis (2010) points out, people are already speaking about and advocating the brands they like and discouraging others from using the brands they do not, and this is happening regardless of the official presence of that brand. Consumer brand communities are one example of this. Defined as "specialized, non-geographically bound communities, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006) brand communities are environments where social interaction is not initiated by the brand but is driven by the participation of its members due to the commitment that they feel to the brand.

Consumer-brand and consumer-to-consumer interactions are therefore seen as a pivotal dimension of consumer engagement, in marketing literature. Many of the conceptualisations of consumer/customer engagement as well as media and fan page engagement acknowledge to some extent the necessity of these interactions. It is because these interactions exist that it will be argued later in section 2 that these interactions are also subject to social influence forces and therefore a gap in the study of consumer engagement exists to acknowledge the role of these influence forces in this context.

However, there is still the need to identify what are the antecedents of consumer engagement that have already been put forward by other academics in the field.

There are several similarities between the conceptualisation of engagement in the wider literature and the marketing approach illustrated in Table 17. The first one is the perception by many authors of the multidimensionality of the concept. For example, Brodie et al. (2013) and Patterson et al. (2006) see consumer engagement as a multi-dimensional concept, comprised of cognitive absorption, emotional dedication and behavioural vigour and interaction with the focal object. *Vigour* refers to the customer's level of energy while interacting with an organisation, its employees, the brand or other customers. *Vigour* is also associated with the willingness to allocate time and effort to this interaction (giving it some similarities with the construct commitment). *Dedication* according to Patterson et al. (2006) refers to the customer's sense of belonging and is similarly to London et al.'s (2007) interpretation of one of the different dimensions for 'student engagement'. Absorption relates to the state of being fully concentrated, happy and deeply engrossed while playing the customer role (overlapping conceptually with the concept of *flow*). Finally, interaction refers to the various interactions and connections that are formed between the customers, the organisation/brand as well as among other customers.

Another key element in any of the different forms of engagement illustrated in Table 17 is the necessity of two way interactions between a subject (customer) and an object (e.g. brand, organisation, other customers) in order to elicit some level of engagement. This existence of interaction beyond mere purchase is one of the main distinctive features of the concept of engagement in the marketing context (Hollebeek, 2011). Consumer interaction with the focal brand, the media, advertising, or other customers in online communities is important not only for academics. In fact, there is a focus on interaction in practitioner's literature, too (Stinger, 2006).

Table 17-The concept of engagement in marketing and communications literature

Contextual dimension	Author(s)	Concept(s)	Definitions	Dimensions
Consumer	Brodie et al. (2013)	Consumer engagement	Interactive experiences between consumers and the brand, and/or other members of the community. Consumer engagement is a context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes.	Multidimensional: 1.Cognitive 2.Emotional 3.Behavioural
Customer	Patterson, Yu, and De Ruyter (2006)	Customer engagement	The level of a customer's physical, cognitive & emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization	Multidimensional: 1. Vigour 2. Dedication 3. Absorption 4. Interaction
	Van Doorn et al. (2010)	Customer engagement behaviours	The customer's behavioural manifestation toward the brand or firm, Beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers	Multidimensional: 1. Valence 2. Form 3. Scope 4. Nature 5. Customer goals
	Hollebeek (2011)	Customer Brand engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related & context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional & behavioural activity in brand Interactions	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioural
Advertising	Phillips and McQuarrie (2010)	Advertising engagement	Modes of engagement are routes to persuasion	Multidimensional: Consumers engage ads to: 1. Act 2. Identify 3. Feel 4. Immerse

Media	Calder and Malthouse (2010)	Media engagement	A motivational experience; being connected to a specific medium	Multidimensional: 1. Transportation 2. Irritation 3. Promotion 4. Rejection
	Jahn, B., & Kunz, W. (2012)	Fan page engagement	Interactive and integrative participation in the fan-page community and would differentiate this from solely the usage intensity of a member.	Multidimensional: 1. Member of community. 2. Active member 3. Interactive member 4. Participative member.
Engagement	Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, and Marshall (2010)	Engagement	Requires consumer connection (e.g. with specific media)	1. Utilitarian 2. Hedonic 3. Social
	Higgins (2006)		Being engaged is to be involved, occupied & interested in something	Multidimensional (inferred): 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioural
	Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005)	Brand community engagement	Positive influences of identifying with the brand community through the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact/co-operate with community members	Multidimensional (inferred): 1. Utilitarian 2. Hedonic 3. Social
	Haven and Vittal (2008)	Engagement	Engagement is the level of involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence an individual has with a brand over time.	Multidimensional: 1. Involvement 2. Interaction 3. Intimacy 4. Influence.

Adapted and extended from Hollebeek (2011)

3.3 A behavioural perspective to consumer engagement

This research adopts a behavioural perspective on consumer engagement, building on its definition by Van Doorn et al. (2010, p.254) as behaviours that “ go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”. The focus on behavioural manifestations as opposed to a multi-dimensional perspective is because a recurrent outcome of consumer engagement is behavioural changes. Many of the other psychological states associated with consumer engagement, such as trust and commitment (Bansal, Irving, & Taylor, 2004; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), brand experience (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009), consumer identification (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005), brand-consumer connections (Fournier, 1998) and loyalty (Jahn & Kunz, 2012) have a behavioural outcome. Research in CEBs focuses on customer involvement in product development and innovation and customers’ communication about products and brands (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). This has given risen to increasing interest in research that focuses on behavioural outcomes of consumer engagement (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Van Doorn et al., 2010a). Behavioural manifestations of consumer engagement have also been investigated in the context of online environments. Jahn and Kunz (2012) see consumers’ fan page engagement as an interactive and integrative participation in that fan page’s brand community. They posit that engagement behaviours are determined by the social interaction value that the consumers allocate to the interaction with brands and other consumers in these environments. Both company-consumer interaction and consumer participation have a behavioural connotation within marketing literature and have been found to affect the consumption experience. Company-consumer interaction (social exchange) generates value for the consumer (Wikström, 1996).

In the previous two sections, the concept of engagement was discussed both in the wider management and within the marketing literature. However, empirical research in the field of marketing is still limited and can be summarised in Table 18. Most of this research focuses on behavioural manifestations of engagement. Even those studies that claim a multidimensional perspective on engagement (e.g. Brodie et al. 2013) used a behavioural proxy to determine the level of engagement that then led to a *netnographic* study, as it

was based on behavioural outcomes (i.e. length and number of posts). Behavioural outcomes in online environments can be measured in terms of specific activities that can take place in the platform, such as liking, sharing and commenting on content (as was the case in the studies of the studies of (W.-H. S. Tsai & Men, 2013; Gummerus & Liljander, 2012) or to more generic metrics of behaviours, in terms of participation and the generation of word-of-mouth (Chu & Yoojung, 2011; Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

Table 18- Empirical studies on engagement

Year	Author(s)	Concept	Behavioural	Cognitive	Emotional	Manifestation
2005	Algesheimer et al.	Community Engagement		•		Motivation to participate
2009	Calder et al.	Online Engagement		•	•	Stimulation, enjoyment, social facilitation
2011	Chu et al.	Consumer Engagement	•			eWOM
2011	Abdul-Ghan et al.	Engagement	•	•		Time spent on site, money spent
2012	Gummerus and Liljander	Customer Engagement	•			Likes, comments, frequency of visits, playing
2012	Jahn and Kunz	Fan Page Engagement	•	•		Interaction, participation, identification, integration
2013	Brodie et al.	Consumer Engagement	•	•	•	Length and number of posts
2013	Tsai and Men	Consumer Engagement	•			Viewing, reading, watching, liking, having conversations, sharing content, recommending, uploading
2014	Jaakkola and Alexander	Customer Engagement Behaviour	•			Augmenting, codeveloping, influencing, mobilising behaviours

A behavioural perspective on consumer engagement is also shared by marketing practitioners. For example, Haven and Mittal (Haven & Vittal, 2008) argue that engagement measures include quantitative and qualitative metrics that can be collected both online and offline. They see four components of engagement: involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence (the metrics are summarised in Table 19). Although their work does not expand on the distinctions between each of these components, many of the suggested metrics have strong links to the constructs of interaction, participation, consumer identification, trust, and commitment that have been discussed in this section. It is worth noting that several of the metrics for involvement are behavioural in nature, such as visits to a site or time spent on it. Clicks and participation with the online community by uploading videos or photos, as well as word-of-mouth communication in the form of blog posts and comments are also suggested to be manifestations of the engagement that users can have with brands.

Table 19- Components and metrics for consumer engagement

Component	Metric
Involvement	Number of visitors
	Time spent on the site
	Visits to physical store
Interaction	Click-through rates
	Online transactions
	In-store purchases
	Uploaded videos/pictures
Intimacy	Sentiment measurement
	Blog posts
	Blog comments
	Discussions in forums
Influence	Brand awareness
	Loyalty
	Affinity
	Repurchase
	Satisfaction ratings.

Adapted from: (Haven & Vittal, 2008).

Thus, the selection of consumer engagement behaviours is justified by the importance that they have in other studies, and their measurability in the online context, where behaviours such as likes and comments are normally already quantified by marketing academics and practitioners as manifestations of consumer engagement. Furthermore, the meso level nature of this study, makes behavioural interactions a better representation of engagement and better suited for a social influence theory that is intended to predict influence at this level among consumers. The following section will look at the evidence in the literature that supports the use of consumer engagement as the determinant variable, by examining empirical studies that support a social influence perspective on this construct.

Section 2: Consumer engagement and social influence

3.4 Social influence as determinant of consumer engagement

Social influence forces can be determinants of forms of consumer engagement. Empirical research in this matter provides initial support to this argument. For example, Chu and Kim (2011) found that people that are susceptible to normative and informational influence positively affecting their engagement behaviours in social networking sites. Their study provides supportive evidence that the two social impact factors *strength* and *immediacy*, which is conceptualised by them as *homophily*, have a positive effect on the generation of electronic word-of-mouth communications. Prior studies have concluded that friends and members of social networks tend to be similar in socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, race and age, as well as in perceptual attributes such as beliefs and attitudes (Gilly et al., 1998). These types of socio-demographic attributes are manifestations of strength, according to SIT. Furthermore, individuals tend to socialise with those who share similar characteristics, reducing the social immediacy between them (Mouw, 2006). As a consequence, interpersonal communications are more likely to occur between two individuals who are alike – that is, homophilous (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). As a result, exchange of information most frequently occurs between individuals who share some qualities in common (Rogers, 1995; Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970).

Community identification also appears to be an antecedent of engagement behaviours. Users who feel they identify with a brand will be more likely to interact with that brand in online environments, and will have a more positive perception of the other community members (W.-H. S. Tsai & Men, 2013). This is in accordance with the influence processes identified in Chapter 2 and suggests that identification with a focal community might lead to normative behaviour from the target of influence in order to adapt or mimic the behaviour that is rewarded by the community. Social influence forces also appear to affect engagement behaviours in brand communities. Algesheimer et al. (Algesheimer et al., 2005) found that consumer and community characteristics accentuate the brand community's influence on its members. They argue that consumer characteristics, brand knowledge, and the community size are significant determinants of influence. Consumer characteristics and brand knowledge are manifestations of strength under social impact theory. And the number of members is also accounted as a determinant of influence within

this theory. This supports the premise that social influence forces are determinants of consumer engagement behaviours.

So far, this section and the previous one have argued for a behavioural perspective to consumer engagement, despite the multi-dimensionality nature of the construct. This thesis favours a behavioural approach to the construct of engagement because of the nature of the research questions, which are located at a meso level of human interaction, and also due to the philosophical stance of the researcher (discussed in Chapter 5). However, the mere behaviour by itself can have different implications for the consumer and meaning for the brand. Haven and Vittal (Haven & Vittal, 2008) argue that interaction components such as clicks on content should be identified as different to intimacy components such as comments and the generation of other forms of user-generated content. The following sub-section will look at the behaviours that this thesis will use as dependent variables, based on the particular context (Facebook brand pages) and will examine the possible meanings of those behaviours, based on an examination of the literature.

3.5 Consumer engagement behaviours on Facebook

Facebook offers companies several options to contact and communicate with their customers. Four behaviours were identified as possible within a user of a Facebook brand page. Users can decide to look into a page of brand and “Like” the page, which will lead to be able to see further messages from the brand later in his Facebook newsfeed. Furthermore, once that content is displayed, the platform allows users to “Like” the content, leave a comment on the content, and share the content with others. This section examines these behaviours and their meanings for consumers.

3.5.1 Page liking

‘Liking’ a page on Facebook essentially serves as an opt-in mechanism for ongoing communications with the owner of that page (Poynter, 2008). In general, a fan can be

anything from a devotee to an enthusiast of a particular brand. Typical characteristics of fans are self-identification as fan, emotional engagement, cultural competence, auxiliary consumption, and co-production (Kozinets et al., 2010). The internet has made it possible to overcome geographical restrictions and to build fan communities world-wide. In practice, users become fans of a Facebook fan page by pressing the “like-button,” which indicates to their social network that they like this brand; this preference is then added to their profiles (see Figure 14 for an example of a fan page and the “Like Page” button). The new content of this fan page is automatically posted to their personal Facebook news feed, and they can like this content, share it with their friends, post comments on the fan page, get in contact with the company and forward offers from this page, as well as interact with other fans. Therefore Liking the page is the first step towards other forms of interaction with the brand in this environment. Borle et al. (2012) and Dholakia and Durham (U. Dholakia & Durham, 2010) examined the degree to which participating on a Facebook fan page affects customer behaviours. In a longitudinal study conducted in cooperation with two restaurants, Dholakia and Durham (2010) showed an effect of membership on the fan page to behavioural loyalty, spending in the restaurants, and the restaurant category overall. Their findings support the idea that Facebook fan pages are useful for deepening the relationship with customers, creating online communities and increasing consumer engagement (Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

Figure 14- Example of "Page liking" behaviour



3.5.2 Content liking

Facebook defines “liking” content on its platforms as making a connection (Facebook, 2014). The consequence of “liking” content in this platform, according to Facebook, is to generate a story, and it may then appear in that individual’s timeline, it may be displayed on the Page that the individual is connected to, and next to content in third party sites. Liking content also may result in the person endorsing content or other brands, as well as delivering branded messages to others around your networks (Y.-M. Li, Lee, & Lien, 2012b). A study by Chadwick, Martin and Bailey (cited in Owyang, 2010) reports that 33 per cent of Facebook users are fans of brands, and 60 per cent of these consumers are more likely to purchase or recommend to a friend after ‘liking’ brand content. Some authors suggest that liking content in social media is a manifestation of affective evaluation of people, situations or objects (Alhabash et al., 2013). However, other authors argue that motivations behind liking contents are aimed at financial or social rewards,

with users looking to receive discounts or to show brand support to their friends (Harris and Dennis, 2011). This evidence suggest that liking content is not a mere meaningless action by users of social media, but there are other cognitive, affective and behavioural drivers underpinning their liking behaviour. Therefore, in this study, “liking” content is to be included as one of the different manifestations of consumer engagement behaviours in social media.

Figure 15- Example of "content liking" behaviour

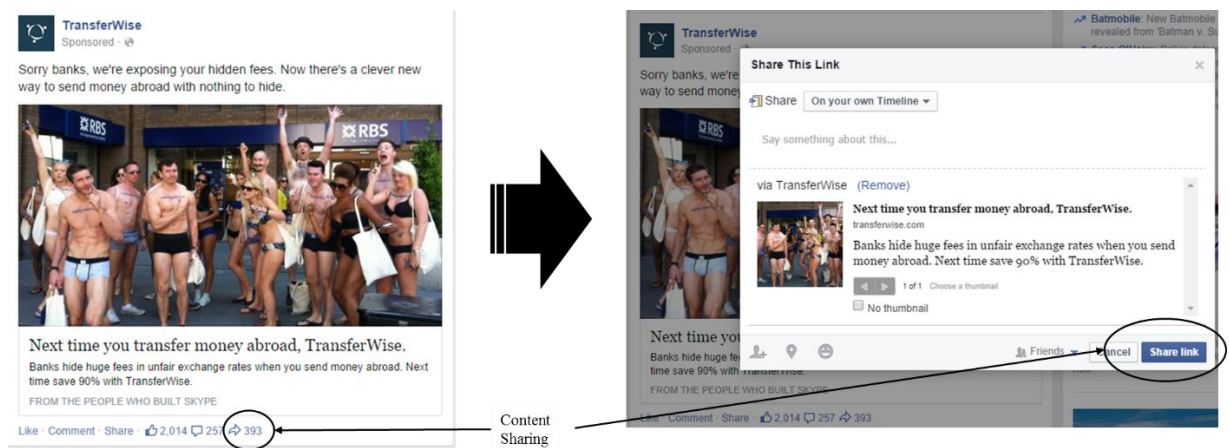


3.5.3 Content sharing

The barriers to sharing content online and in particular on social media websites are considerable lower compared with earlier times (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008). Recent developments on the web and in the realm of other digital media have made it increasingly possible for people to share their creations with others. Sharing is an easy way for users to co-create together with the message source content that is relevant to them and to build

their identity based on the content that is being share (Karahasanović et al., 2009). In some social networking sites (i.e. Twitter) sharing content is perceived as a way to show support to the content being shared. Sharing content is one of the most important criteria for the success of social networking sites, together with sociability (Brandtzæg et al., 2010).

Figure 16- Example of "content sharing" behaviour



3.5.4 Content commenting

Giving the possibility to comment on someone's post is a feature that has been added to social media sites in order to encourage sociability (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Sociability, according to Preece (2006), is the ability to interact with others or to socialise, and it is another of the important features in the success of social media websites (Brandtzæg et al., 2010). By allowing users to comment on content, social connections are being strengthen, and the formation of virtual online communities is possible. There is some evidence that *strength*, which is one of the factors identified by SIT as determinants of influence, affects the generation of consumer communication, in the form of word-of-mouth (Chu & Yoojung, 2011).

Figure 17- Example of "content commenting" behaviour



4.6 The impact of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours

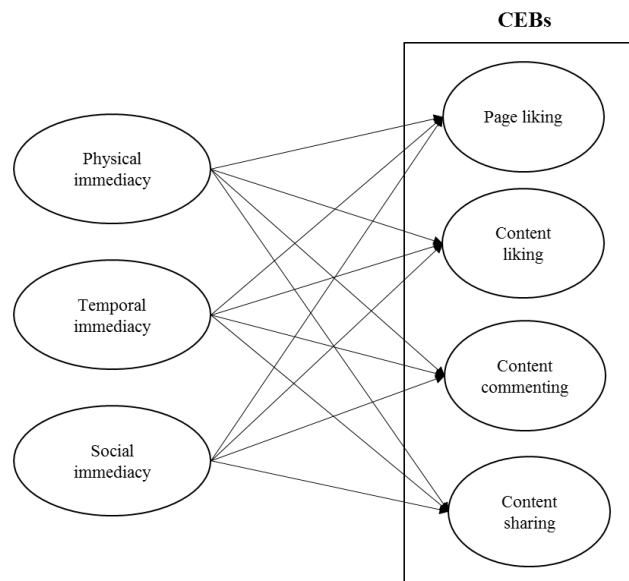
This section develops the model that will be tested in this thesis. A gap has been identified in terms of providing empirical evidence of social impact of different forms of immediacy in a single context. There is also a need to strengthen the number of studies that test SIT in online environments, in particular social media. As discussed in Chapter 1, companies have tried to reach customers through the new channels of communication that are made available (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In this new environment, customers are moving from passive roles as “receivers” of marketing communication activities to co-creators and multipliers of brand messages, this change is creating opportunities for word-of-mouth marketing (Kozinets et al., 2010; Libai et al., 2010).

Immediacy within social impact theory can be manifest in different forms in online contexts. In the case of social media websites, immediacy is constantly changing, as

immediacy relationships between two agents interacting in these environments can vary in terms of geographical location, time and social proximity. An increased understanding of how these variations affect consumer interaction with brands and other consumers can provide brands with valuable knowledge to improve the experience from their interactions with consumers in this medium. A way in which brand managers and social media sites try to improve the level of engagement with their online presence is via immediacy. An example of this is the introduction in 2012 of a new structure for global brands to manage their local presence via Facebook (Darwell, 2012). This new structure allows brands to display unified elements of social influence, such as the number of people already liking or talking to the page, but also allowing users to be redirected to localised versions of the page, based on their physical location. Other forms of immediacy such as temporal and social immediacy of a brand are artificially modified via sponsored posts and social advertising. These are examples of how the immediacy between a brand and a consumer are being realised in this medium with the expectation of becoming more engaging and increasing the levels of interactions between the brand and the consumer. It is in this context that social impact theory is applied to explain the outcomes of these efforts.

The focus of this model is based on the different forms of behavioural interactions that a social media user can have with a brand on Facebook. Facebook offer companies several options to contact and communicate with their customers. On this platform, fan pages are a key element for brand communication, and they are used by brands to integrate and interact with their customer base (Dholakia et al., 2004). Four behaviours have been identified as prominent in terms of consumer-brand interaction in this environment: Page Liking, Content Liking, Content Sharing and Content Commenting. Figure 18 represents the type of relationships that this thesis aims to test between these behaviours and different forms of immediacy.

Figure 18- The impact of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours (CEBs)



Section 3: Research propositions

3.6 Formulation of research propositions

The relationship that exist between immediacy and emotions, feelings and behaviour has been reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. There is a considerable amount of empirical evidence that supports this relationship in both online and offline environments (Table 12). Immediacy is considered to be one of the factors, together with source strength and number of sources that can affect behaviour according to social impact theory (Latane, 1981). However, there is still very limited evidence on how immediacy functions in online environments (J. D. Baker, 2004; Olson & Olson, 2000), yet the existing evidence suggests that at certain level, immediacy has a determinant role of the user experience and interaction of user in this environment (Bradner & Mark, 2002). For this reason, the first research proposition is that similar effects can be found in social media settings. The following proposition is developed:

R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings

3.6.1 Physical Immediacy

Social impact theory proposes a direct relationship between physical immediacy and behavioural outcomes such as giving money, or complying with a request (Latané, 1982). Offline, physical immediacy has been operationalised as geographical distance such as room proximity (Williams & Williams, 1983), city proximity (J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982) and spatial distance between two individuals (Pedersen et al., 2008; Cullum & Harton, 2007; Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001). Online physical immediacy has also been operationalised as geographical distance between cities (Bradner & Mark, 2002). Online physical immediacy is also consonant with telepresence and interactivity which are computer user perceptions of geographic proximity in an online space. Conceptual work by Mollen and Wilson (Mollen & Wilson, 2010) proposes that according to the Stimulus-Organism-Response model (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) there will be a positive relationship between perceived interactivity and telepresence and engagement behaviour. Bradner and Mark (2002) found that an increase in online physical distance increases deceptive behaviour and reduces response to persuasion and co-operation amongst work teams. Empirical research by Yoon (2002) found that a reduction in online physical distance increases online trust in a company among consumers. Affective responses such as online trust are shown to act as a mediator between physical distance and consumer engagement behaviours such as eWOM in social networking sites (Chu & Yoojung, 2011; de Matos & Rossi, 2008). Hence it is proposed that there is a direct relationship between physical immediacy and each form of engagement behaviour.

The second research proposition states that the closer the Fan Page is to the location where the customer is, the higher the intentions to want to follow this page will be. Under this proposition, brands that explicitly mention their location and situations when this location is physically close to the consumers will elicit higher intentions to like that page. Support for this proposition comes from empirical data that showed that in the context of social selection, Facebook users' probability of engaging in certain behaviours, including befriending someone, is inversely proportional to their physical distance up to a certain degree (Backstrom, Sun, & Marlow, 2010). It is anticipated that users will "befriend" or decide to engage in Face Page liking behaviour with those pages that are physically close

to them. In addition fan page liking results in messages from that brand being present in the newsfeed of the user and thus liking a page may be a form of identity work. A study by ExactTarget (2010) found that almost 40% of consumers “like” companies on Facebook to publicly display their brand affiliation to “friends.” These results link with theoretical support for this research proposition in terms of the incentives to engage with a brand as physical distance reduces. Firstly, the incentive theory of motivation suggest that we are motivated to engage if there is a meaningful reward; this means that if there are vouchers and offers as a result of liking a fan page or content, this means geographically close fans will respond, as a reduction in distance increases the meaning of the reward. Thus the first research proposition can be unfolded into:

R2a: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.

Fan page liking is the first step towards other forms of engagement behaviours with brand fan pages. Since Facebook Page liking behaviour shows affective commitment to engage in a relationship with that brand in social media settings, it is hypothesized that this could affect the intentions to perform other forms of engagement behaviours. The subsequent proposition focus on these other forms of behaviour: content liking, content commenting and content sharing.

In order to define the direction of this relationship, it is important to take into account studies that focus on the relationship between interactions in online environments and physical immediacy. Physical immediacy has shown to affect social interactions at different degrees in offline and online contexts (Rosette, Brett, Barsness, & Lytle, 2012; Mok, Wellman, & Carrasco, 2010; Ganesan, Malter, & Rindfleisch, 2005). High physical immediacy results in higher levels of interactions in face-to-face and telephone settings; evidence in online environments suggest that in computer-mediated environments this relationship also exists, with the number of interactions being determine by the social structures (e.g. tie strength, degree of intimacy) rather than by the physical immediacy that exists between the users (Mok et al., 2010). Other studies have found similar results (e.g., Wellman et al., 2006). Studies of “friendship” ties on LiveJournal (e.g., Liben-Nowell et al., 2005) also found an effect of distance. Therefore, it is also expected that social interactions in the context of social media will also increase as physical immediacy increases:

R2b: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.

R2c: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions.

R2d: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

3.6.2 Social immediacy

Social impact theory proposes that social immediacy has a direct relationship on behavioural outcomes (Latané, 1981). Characteristics of a source of influence such as race or social class are found to determine the perception of social immediacy in empirical studies (Triandis, 1989; Triandis & Triandis, 1960). High social immediacy is found to increase trust and reciprocity (Charness et al., 2007; Cox and Deck, 2005; Eckel and Wilson, 2002) which in turn has positive effects on work performance, cooperation, risk taking, and reduction of inefficient organizational behaviour such as avoidance (Colquitt et al., 2007; Rao and Schmidt, 1998).

Low social immediacy results in social norms not being clear for the participants of that interaction and has an effect on the negotiation style and targeted outcome expected from both parties (Rosette et al., 2012). These findings can be explained via social awareness theory and its accompanying research, which suggests that the social distance between members of different groups reduces social awareness and increases self-interested behaviour (Rosette et al., 2012).

Strength of weak ties (SWT) theory also supports the significance of social immediacy (which within the theory is called *tie strength*) as a determinant of behavioural and cognitive outcomes (Granovetter, 1973). Tie strength is the amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocity that exist between two individuals, and it determines the diffusion of influence and information. This means that strong tie relationships are more likely to entail a greater amount of information flow between the dyads, and also have a greater degree of influence over each other (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973; Leonard-Barton, 1985; Reingen and Kernan, 1986). Tie strength has

also been shown to influence consumer engagement behaviours such as word-of-mouth (Wirtz & Chew, 2002). Empirical evidence shows that the amount of word-of-mouth generated is higher within groups with many strong tie relations (e.g. close friends) as opposed to within groups with many weak tie relations (Bone, 1992). Social immediacy has been also found to drive sharing activity in online environments, such as sharing music content within an individual social network (Tran, Cebrian, Krumme, & Pentland, 2011).

Thus it is proposed that social immediacy has a relationship with other consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings such as Facebook Page liking activities, content liking, content sharing and content commenting. These relationships are expected to be in the following direction:

R3a: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook Page liking intentions.

R3b: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.

R3c: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions.

R3d: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

3.6.3 Temporal immediacy

Social media websites are characterised by allowing both synchronous and asynchronous communication (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Increasing interest has been devoted to the role that time plays in affecting consumers' judgments and behaviours (Hoch and Loewenstein, 1991; Hornik and Schlinger, 1981; Jacoby, Szybillo, and Berning, 1976). However, the body of knowledge applied to the online context is still very limited.

Construal level theory (CLT) posits that people use a higher level of construal to represent an object/person or event as the temporal distance increases. Thus, as temporal

immediacy decreases, people will tend to focus on more abstract elements, while at high temporal immediacy people will tend to focus more on operational details. Empirical evidence from Castano et al. (Castaño, Sujan, Kacker, & Sujan, 2008) found that when adoption of a new product is in the distant future, people are more concerned about performance and symbolic-benefit uncertainties. In contrast, in the near future, the concerns are more about switching- and affective-cost uncertainties.

The view of CLT on temporal immediacy is also shared by Kahneman and Miller's (1986) norm theory. They posit that people elicit more intense affect to temporally immediate scenarios. For instance, Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1992) suggest that the effect of temporal distance on emotional response will be higher on events occurring to a close friend one week ago vs. 9 months ago. Thus it is anticipated that temporal immediacy will have similar positive effects on the consumer engagement behaviours being measured:

R4a: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook Page liking intentions.

R4b: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.

R4c: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions.

R4d: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

3.6.4 Product involvement as moderator

The concept of involvement was discussed in the previous chapter (section 2.22), where evidence from many studies suggest that the level of involvement that a consumer has with a focal object (e.g. product, brand, or advertisement) can moderate how the user interacts with it. In the context of Facebook fan pages, Kietzman et al. (2011) and

Mangold and Faulds (2009) suggest that a similar effect can exist in regards with the interaction between users and brands in social media channels. A consumers that is highly involved with a certain product or product category, will engage more with that product at cognitive, behavioural and emotional levels, regardless of the platform where the interaction is occurring. Therefore the following research proposition is formulated:

R5a: Product involvement will moderate the effect of physical immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

R5b: Product involvement will moderate the effect of social immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

R5c: Product involvement will moderate the effect of temporal immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

3.6.5 Facebook intensity usage as moderator

The usage of social media sites varies according to various demographic factors. Studies in the US have found differences based on age and ethnic groups (Pew Research Center, 2014b), and over time (Pew Research Center, 2014a). No difference has been found in other demographic factors such as gender or income. It is reasonable to expect that people can have different levels of usage intensity based on their own personal use of the internet and a given platform. For this reason, it is proposed that the intensity usage of Facebook as a platform can moderate the engagement behaviours that occur in this environment. The following research proposition is put forward:

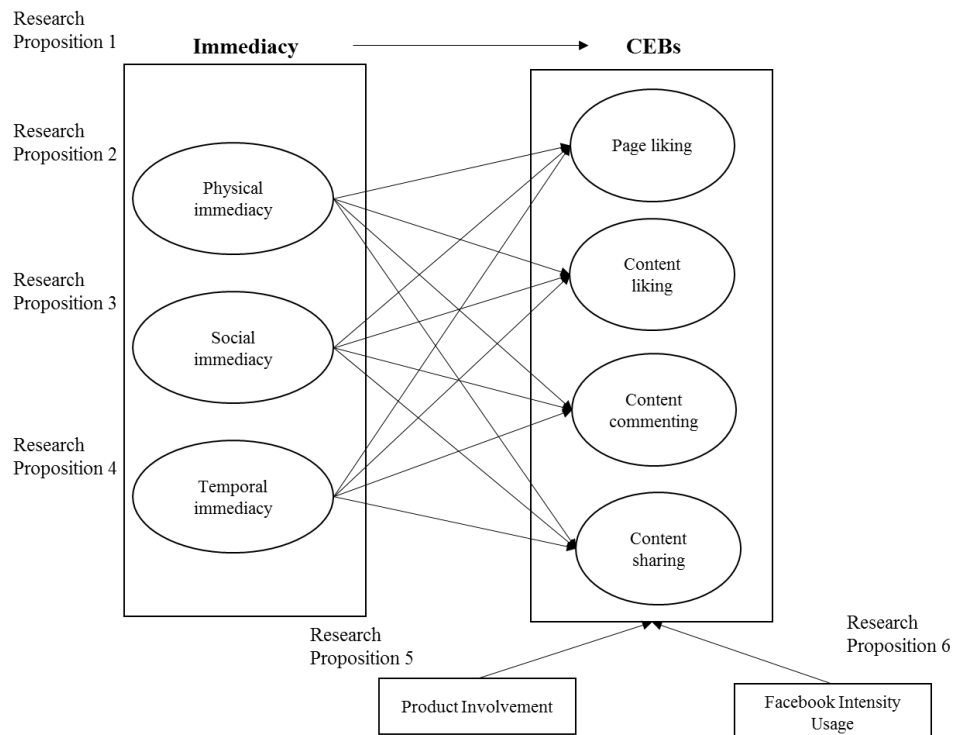
R6a: Facebook intensity usage will moderate the effect of physical immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

R6b: Facebook intensity usage will moderate the effect of physical immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

R6c: Facebook intensity usage will moderate the effect of physical immediacy in all engagement behaviours.

All the previously stated research propositions and relationships are illustrated in Figure 19 below:

Figure 19- Research propositions and relationships between immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours



3.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has examined the construct of consumer engagement and consumer engagement behaviours in the wider literature. The relevance of these types of behaviours was made evident by the increased interest in CE and CEBs shown by marketing academics and practitioners. Evidence was provided that CEBs relate to positive outcomes to brands by positively affecting elements that are valuable for companies, such as consumer trust (Hollebeek, 2011), satisfaction and loyalty (Bowden, 2009) and commitment (Chan and Li, 2010). These elements are considered to be strong indicators of long-term sales, word-of-mouth and brand advocacy (Brodie et al., 2011).

This chapter has also examined the literature on consumer engagement and its relationship with social influence literature. In this review, consumer engagement was observed to be of increasing importance within the marketing literature. The chapter has provided evidence that social influence forces have been proved to affect consumer engagement behaviours such as participation and word-of-mouth communication, and therefore it is also suggested that other forms of CEBs might also be subject to social influence.

The chapter also examined the different behavioural outcomes that interaction with brands in the context of social media websites may have. In particular, three behaviours were identified: page liking, page following, content commenting and content sharing. The implications of each of these behaviours were also examined and were deemed appropriate as manifestations of consumer engagement behaviour in the context of social media.

Finally, this chapter has presented a social impact model based on SIT and applied it to the four consumer engagement behaviours that were examined in the chapter. In this model physical, temporal and social immediacy are proposed to positively affect these behaviours. This chapter concluded by illustrating how the research aims and research objectives relate to each of the research propositions being examined. Table 20 also provides an overview of how these research propositions will be investigated using qualitative and quantitative. The following chapters develops the methodological implications of these studies.

Table 20- Research phases

Research Aim	Research Objectives	Research Propositions	Phases
To measure the degree of social influence that the construct of immediacy can have on customer engagement behaviours with brands in social media settings.	To explore if immediacy is a social influence determinant in online contexts.	R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Phase 1: Exploring the relationship of immediacy and CEBs
	To explore and measure if different forms of immediacy have the same effect on consumer behaviours in social media settings.	R2: Physical immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R3: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R4: Temporal immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Phase 2: Measuring the effect of immediacy on CEBs
	To explore social influence moderators in social media environments	R5: Social influence factors can be moderated by context dependent variables.	Phase 1: Exploring social influence moderators
	To measure the effect of other factors, such as product involvement and platform intensity usage, as moderators of online interactions between consumers and brands in social media settings.	R6: Product involvement can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R7: Platform intensity usage can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Phase 2: Measuring the effect of social influence moderators on CEBs

Chapter 4: Research Philosophy

4.1 Chapter Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to account for the ontological and epistemological stance that this thesis is adopting. The chapter starts by introducing the three main philosophical positions that are found in marketing science: positivism, interpretivism and critical realism. Each of these three positions are briefly described in terms of their ontological and epistemological perspectives, and their main limitations are also acknowledged. The chapter continues by giving the reasons why this thesis adopts a positivist approach, and the methodological implications of such a choice. A conclusion closes the chapter.

Defining a philosophical stance

4.2 On the importance of philosophy in marketing theory

Philosophy is defined as “the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence” (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). Within this definition, the first two elements the “nature of knowledge” and the nature of “reality”, are of special interest in scientific research, including marketing. The first one, the nature of knowledge, directly relates to another term commonly used in any philosophical debate known as epistemology or the also known as the theory of knowledge (Bryman, 2008). Epistemology defines what can be considered to be knowledge, and, by doing so, it has implications in terms of the methods, validity and scope needed to study, analyse and generate knowledge (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). The second element in the definition of philosophy is the nature of reality itself. Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of reality. From a social research perspective, ontological enquiry attempts to explain whether the social world or reality is external to the actors or it is something that is constructed by the perceptions and actions of these actors.

In marketing, Lutz (Lutz, 1989) argues that it is imperative for the marketing scholar to be aware of the philosophical underpinnings of their research. The philosophical choices made that delimit the area of study of any research (ontology), affects how this area will

be investigated (epistemology); and also influences the methods that are going to be used (Anderson, 1986; Tadajewski, 2004). The philosophical stance is of particular importance for a research project at a doctoral level and should be studied within the context of the debates that have occurred in the field in the last 30 years (Burton, 2003; Hackley, 2003). A great part of the debate is linked to the question of whether or not marketing is a science or an art (Bartels, 1951; S. Brown, 1996). Efforts to establish the field as scientific, underpinned the adoption of scientific methods similar to those in the natural sciences (S. Hunt, 1990; S. D. Hunt, 1991). Later debates were driven by a discussion of the meaning of truth and questions about the scientific method as a whole, and the worth of the marketing scientist to pursue a goal that was, according to some, unattainable and meaningless (Anderson, 1983; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). From this debate, three main philosophical stances are identified which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3 Positivism: ontological and epistemological implications

Positivism departed from an effort to discern between “authentic” knowledge coming from facts via observable phenomena and unverifiable phenomena. Proposed initially by Comte as an alternative to the theological and metaphysical generation of knowledge, it set out the principles that drove scientific research in the natural sciences (Caldwell, 2003; Comte, 1997). Another philosophical stance known as logical positivism emerged in Vienna with its major contributors being thinkers such as Schlick and Neurath. In broad terms, logical positivism argues for the generation of knowledge that can be empirically verified, and the rejection of any other form of unverifiable phenomena and associated theories (Caldwell, 2003). However, this verifiability principle in logical positivism proved to be an untenable principle for scientific enquiry, and was later replaced by falsifiability. To falsify did not mean that phenomena was made false, but instead that if it is false, this can be demonstrated via observation or experimentation (Popper, 1902). Behind all these efforts to make sure what can be considered as knowledge, positivists were arguing that only scientific knowledge was worth pursuing, and that this type of knowledge can only be obtained via direct experiences that are observable, measurable and replicable by others (Caldwell, 2003; Peter and Olson, 1993). The pursuit of Truth was therefore one of the main goals of scientific activities under positivism (Hunt, 1990).

From an ontological perspective, positivism argues for objectivism, a position that asserts that “social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors” (Bryman, 2008, p. 19). Objectivism states that reality exists independently of the individuals. The view of the positivists can be summarised by the belief that there is only one real and objective world and that this world is out there to be analysed and tested via hypothesis generation. (Kavanagh, 1994). In positivism, the focus is on predicting phenomena, with little focus on the explanations, as most of the explanations, especially in the social sciences fell within the metaphysical realm, and were therefore rejected by a positivist view.

Within positivism, there are different views. Hanson and Grimmer (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007) identified two strands of positivism. One follows a hard ontological approach, and argues for the existence of an objective reality which can be found. From an epistemological perspective, this view also argues for the use of objectively correct scientific methods to uncover with this knowledge with a particular degree of certainty (Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008; Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, a softer perspective to positivism infers that objective reality exists, but acknowledges that the methods available to uncover this reality produce probabilistic and at times uncertain results (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In marketing literature, a positivist approach relies on quantitative research, using numerical representations of the issues and research questions that marketing academics are aiming to solve (S. D. Hunt, 2010). For positivists, concepts such as reliability and validity are used to assess the generalizability of the results that are obtained. This view remains dominant to date in many leading marketing journals. A cross-sectional study of 1,195 articles published in three leading marketing journals (Journal of Marketing, European Journal of Marketing and Journal of Services Marketing) between 1993 and 2002 found that 46.3% of those articles had a quantitative/positivist method (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007).

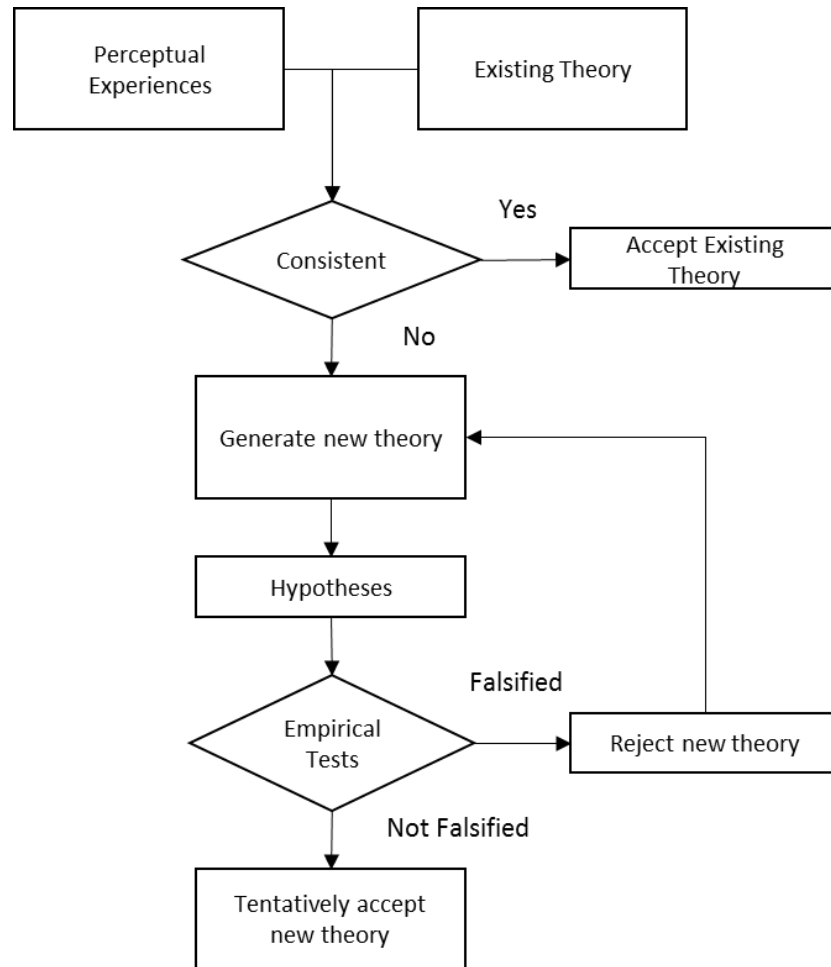
Critics of positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Anderson, 1983) expose the flaws in the different branches of positivism, from logical empiricism to falsification, and advocate for a more interpretivist approach based on the research traditions of a specific area of study. In addition, it has been recognised that a positivist approach leads to an obtuse view of research questions since it de-contextualises the problem for the sake of

objectivity, and therefore it has been argued that the results of them could not be even applied to other contexts or even to the same context with different people. Under the anti-positivist view, humans, unlike unanimated objects, create meaning from the world surrounding them, and this meaning is context dependent. For this school of thought quantification lacks the power to expose these nuances and therefore conclusions drawn from these are stripped of crucial elements that could help explain any event. Hunt (1991), a strong supporter of the positivist approach, argues that although objectivity might not be achieved by the scientific process proposed by positivism, it should be in the central interest of science to at least try to achieve some degree of it, and interpretivism fails to achieve that and therefore should be disregarded as a scientific view.

Logic of scientific discovery

A view of the scientific process that opposes traditional logical empiricism in positivism is Popper's "falsificationism". Under this view, the scientific process begins when observation clashes with existing theories (See Figure 20). A new theory is proposed and some hypotheses are formulated to be tested. The objective of the testing is the refutation of the hypotheses. If the predictions are falsified, then the new theory is rejected. Theories that are falsified are not unconditionally accepted, but rather tentatively accepted until more empirical knowledge confirms or rejects them (Popper, 2014).

Figure 20- The falsification model of scientific method



Source: (Anderson, 1983)

4.4 Interpretivism: ontological and epistemological implications

Interpretivism is a contrasting epistemology to positivism, rejecting the notion of theory-neutral observations as well as the applicability of universal laws, as in the natural sciences (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Informed by the work of Weber and its efforts to not only predict phenomena based on observable facts, this paradigm argues for explanation and understanding of the phenomena through the interpretation of social actions (Bryman, 2008). A strong advocate of this position is Kuhn (1962 in Hunt, 1990), who argues that “reality” in science is constructed, and that what is considered to be knowledge is relative to the conceptual frameworks from which scholars depart. This view of what can be

considered as knowledge is then strongly linked to the way reality itself is perceived by the supporters of this position.

From an ontological perspective, interpretivism takes a constructionist approach, arguing for different realities depending on how each person (or society) interprets (constructs) them. As a consequence of this, “what comes to count as ‘reality’ cannot be evaluated objectively, impartially or non-arbitrarily”. For that reason, since knowledge is socially constructed it needs to be socially evaluated, and its supporters have made the human and his actions the unit of measure to study, in contrast with the positivist view that saw reality as detached from social actors (Crotty, 1998; Easton, 2008). In its more extreme views, interpretivism acknowledges that all *realities* can be *true*, and that variations depend on how the mind *constructs* or *interprets* them, based on how well informed or sophisticated is the construct in the beholder’s mind (Hunt, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The debate in terms of the ontology and epistemology in social sciences, in particular in marketing, was indeed irreconcilable, as the principles behind each of the positions presented were exactly in opposite directions. As Table 21 illustrates, positivists acknowledge only tangible phenomena, which led them to incur several limitations when trying to explain the behaviour of social actors. However, positivist views look for the discovery of the true nature of reality. In this respect, this paradigm has been criticised, as truth/reality/knowledge is believed to be hard to achieve, since theories and measurements are believed to be context dependent under the interpretivist view. However, Hunt (S. Hunt, 1990) challenges this Nihilistic view of science, as he argues that this would lead the scientific method to become irrelevant and incoherent. In this matter, Adler (Adler, 1997) argues that one of the most common philosophical mistakes is the definition of “knowledge” in a such a precise and circumscribed manner that it becomes impossible to attain, and then this leads to the interpretivist view that all knowledge claims are “mere opinions”. This is labelled as the “philosopher’s fallacy” by Harre (Harré, 1986) , who argues that if you take any concept (e.g. truth, knowledge, progress, etc.) and subject it to such level of high redefinition then that the term cannot be applied to anything.

**Table 21- Differences between positivistic/empiricist and
interpretivist/constructionist views of science**

Positivistic/Empiricist Science	Interpretivist/Constructionist Science
Science discovers the true nature of reality.	Science creates many realities.
Only the logic of justification is needed to understand science.	The processes by which theories are created, justified, and diffused throughout a research community are needed to understand science.
Science can be understood without considering cultural, social, political, and economic factors.	Science is a social process and cannot be understood without considering cultural, social, political, and economic factors.
Science is objective.	Science is subjective.
Scientific knowledge is absolute and cumulative.	Scientific knowledge is relative to a particular context and period of time in history.
Science is capable of discovering universal laws that govern the external world.	Science creates ideas that are context-dependent, i.e., relative to a frame of reference.
Science produces theories that come closer and closer to absolute truth.	Truth is a subjective evaluation that cannot be properly inferred outside of the context provided by the theory.
Science is rational since it follows formal rules of logic,	Science is rational to the degree that it seeks to improve individual and societal wellbeing by following whatever means are useful for doing so.
There are specific rules for doing science validly (e.g., falsification),	There are many ways of doing science validly that are appropriate in different situations.
Scientists subject their theories to potential falsification through rigorous empirical testing.	Scientists seek supportive, confirmatory evidence in order to market their theories.
Measurement procedures do not influence what is measured.	Nothing can be measured without changing it.
Data provide objective, independent benchmarks for testing theories,	Data are created and interpreted by scientists in terms of a variety of theories, and thus are theory laden.

Source: Peter and Olson (1983)

In addition, positivists held the underlying assumption that there is one universal Truth and reality and that this Truth can be completely understood and represented using the scientific method. For positivists, these representations could be exact representations of reality, and therefore incontestable when evidence supported (or did not falsify) the theory.

On the other hand, the interpretivist approach led also to extreme views from its main supporters, and as Hunt (1990) points out, this directed thinkers following this tradition to conduct research without the goal of explaining how the ‘real’ world worked as no ‘real’ world existed under their views. This incommensurability between realities can lead to irrelevance of the search to understand the world and incoherence in research propositions (Hunt, 1990). Reconciliation in this debate seems to have appeared with realism, which did not take views as radical as the previous philosophical stances, but recognised the weaknesses in each position and tried to introduce measures to overcome those limitations.

4.5 Critical Realism: ontological and epistemological implications

Realism, and in particular critical realism, is considered by some marketing academics as an integrative philosophical position between positivism and interpretivism, as well as a preferred philosophical stance of marketing research (Easton, 2002). Critical realism was introduced by Roy Bhaskar, under the term “transcendental realism”. Critical realism recognises the existence of reality, but also asserts that there are “structures” and underlying mechanisms that exist beyond reality and that are not knowable (Bhaskar, 1998). A critical realist approach is a good fit for this thesis enquiry. As discussed in Chapter 3, the theories in social influence acknowledge that changes are not limited to the behavioural outcomes, but they also acknowledge that cognitive and attitudinal processes can be affected by the presence of other (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In addition, the reviews of social influence theories from a conformity (Section 2.6), social norms (Section 2.7) and compliance (Section 2.8) perspective are evidence that depending on the theoretical underpinnings of the theory, social influence can be explained, which makes it theory-laden. To further understand the fit between critical realism and social impact theory, an account of the main principles that underpin critical realism will be given.

The stance of critical realism in the ontology and epistemology debate, is summarised in eight characteristics outlined by Sayer (Sayer, 1992):

1. *The world exists independently of our knowledge of it.*
2. *Our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden.*
3. *Knowledge develops neither wholly continuously, as the steady accumulation of facts with a stable conceptual framework, nor discontinuously, through simultaneous and universal changes in concepts.*
4. *Objects –whether natural or social- necessarily have particular powers or ways of acting and particular susceptibilities.*
5. *The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events.*
6. *Social phenomena such as actions, texts, and institutions are concept-dependent.*
7. *Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice.*
8. *Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena, we have to evaluate them critically.*

As can be appreciated in these 8 characteristics of critical realism, this position shares certain views from positivism, such as the existence of an external reality and the use of the scientific method for data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2008). However, unlike the positivist view, realism does not follow the logical empiricist view that observable, verifiable, empirically tested concepts and variables can be measured and accounted for to explain phenomena, rejecting the existence of the metaphysical in scientific enquiry. Instead, the metaphysical mechanisms that can be behind observable concepts are recognised and are taken as valid concepts to be studied. Like the interpretivist view, critical realism recognises that knowledge and concepts are theory-laden. However, despite the fact that those elements are dependent on the framework on which they are studied, they still exist independently.

Critical realism argues for the inexistence of natural and social laws, since the facts and reality that human beings know are a product of human society, and therefore they do not represent the objective truth. In this matter, Bhaskar argues:

“Any adequate philosophy of science must find a way of grappling with the central paradox of science: that men in their social activity produce knowledge which is a social product much like any other, which is no more independent of its production and the men who produce than motor cars, armchairs or books, which has its own craftsmen, technicians, publicists standards and skills and which is no less subject to change than any other commodity” (Bhaskar, 1998, p.16).

However, this argument lacks consistency, as it denies that science is able to produce knowledge that is detached from the sources that produced it; yet he argues that the essential nature of the things can be known through scientific methods:

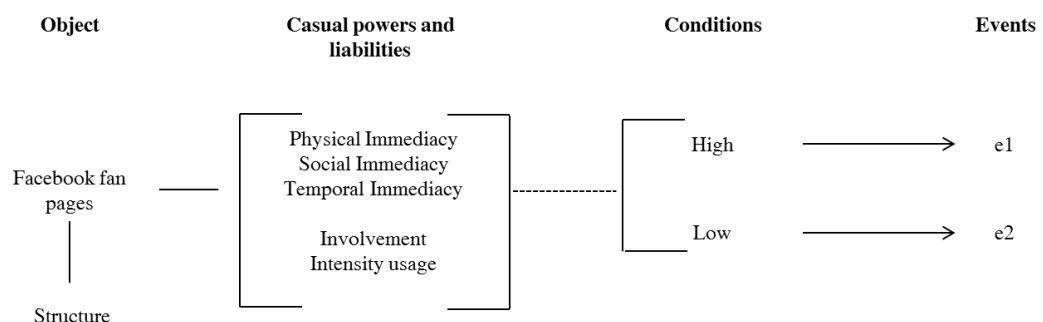
“In general to classify a group of things together in science, to call them by the same name, presupposes that they possess a real essence or nature in common, though it does not presuppose that the real essence or nature is known” (Bhaskar, 1998, p.86).

Thus, some critics of critical realism argue that “it struggles to reconcile the assertion that empirical reality cannot show the truth of the world, that the idea cannot correspond with the thing in itself, with an acceptance that the thing-in-itself can be known and that without empirical proof science is unscientific, abstract and empty... It inadvertently refutes the possibility of science through its assertion of an open, undetermined social world, not subject to laws, even retroductively, while failing to notice that it applies the very laws that it denies exist, both in the natural world and the social one” (Jefferies, 2011).

4.6 Causal explanation in critical realism

In critical realism, causality is not explained by the relationship of discrete events (e.g. A \rightarrow B), but instead critical realism looks at the causal powers and liabilities of objects (See Table 22). These objects can be anything with causal powers, in this case the Facebook fan page that has causal power to affect certain events (i.e. intention to perform a behaviour) based on the different immediacies that that page possess (Easton, 2002). The causal powers of these objects are theory-laden, and in this case social impact theory provides the labels from which these causal powers are analysed. Critical realism also allows for context, where different conditions and different objects can affect the relationship that exists between causal powers and the events. Objects in different contexts will also have different causal powers. In the context of this study, this means that using a different platform and different conditions can lead to a series of different events.

Table 22- The structure of causal explanation: a critical realist approach



Adapted from Sayer, 1992

4.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a discussion on the different philosophical stances that are available to marketing as a science. Ontological and epistemological stances are important because they determine the view of a researcher about the world, and the methods that can be used to explain (or understand) the phenomena of interest. For

marketing, regardless of the philosophy of the researcher “a greater commitment to theory-driven programmatic research, aimed at solving cognitively and socially significant problems” is needed (Anderson, 1983). Due to the nature of this research a critical realist approach is taken by this thesis, as the aim of the thesis is to explore relationships of objective phenomena (i.e. engagement behaviours towards brand fan pages) but taking into consideration the context in which this research is being pursued. The following chapter will look at the research design that will be outlined for this thesis, and that it is informed by the philosophical discussion of this chapter.

Chapter 5: Research Design

5.1 Chapter introduction

This section discusses the choices made previous to the collection of empirical data. The chapter is structured in four sections, each one discussing an important element of the research design process. Section 1 focuses on the research strategy, and argues for the use of mixed methods with a combination of focus groups and an experimental design to answer the research objectives of this thesis. This section also outlines the process involved in the development of a focus group protocol as well as an experimental design, and develops each of the steps identified in the literature. Section 2 focuses on the experimental procedures that will be conducted, in terms of the selection of participants and the use of online vs. paper-based surveys to measure the variables of interest, as well as the ethical considerations associated with those procedures. Section 3 narrows down the whole experimental design into the procedure for each of the three studies to be conducted. In this section each of the dependent and independent variables are introduced, and the choices of context and measurement procedures are also discussed. Moderating and confounding variables are also identified in this section. Finally, section 4 serves as a concluding section, highlighting the key choices made in terms of research design and leading towards the chapter that presents the results from the empirical research. An overview of how the studies are structured, their corresponding hypotheses and link to a research objective is presented in the next section.

5.2 The research phases and their relationship with the aims and objectives

This thesis aims to measure the degree of influence that the construct of immediacy, has on customer engagement behaviours with brands, using social media as a context. In order to fulfil this aim, the research is divided into a series of research propositions. A mixed methods approach is used in order to explore and measure the effects of immediacy and its moderators in this context. These relationships are outlined in the table below:

Table 23- Research phases and its relation with research aims and objectives

Research Aim	Research Objectives	Research Propositions	Study
To measure the degree of social influence that the construct of immediacy can have on customer engagement behaviours with brands in social media settings.	To explore if immediacy is a social influence determinant in online contexts.	R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Focus groups/ Experimental studies 1,2, and 3.
	To explore and measure if different forms of immediacy have the same effect on consumer behaviours in social media settings.	R2: Physical immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R3: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R4: Temporal immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Focus groups/ Experimental study 1, 2, and 3
	To explore social influence moderators in social media environments	R5: Social influence factors can be moderated by context dependent variables.	Focus groups
	To measure the effect of other factors, such as product involvement and platform intensity usage, as moderators of online interactions between consumers and brands in social media settings.	R6: Product involvement can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R7: Platform intensity usage can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.	Experimental study 1, 2 and 3

Section 1: Research strategy

5.3 Exploratory research through focus groups

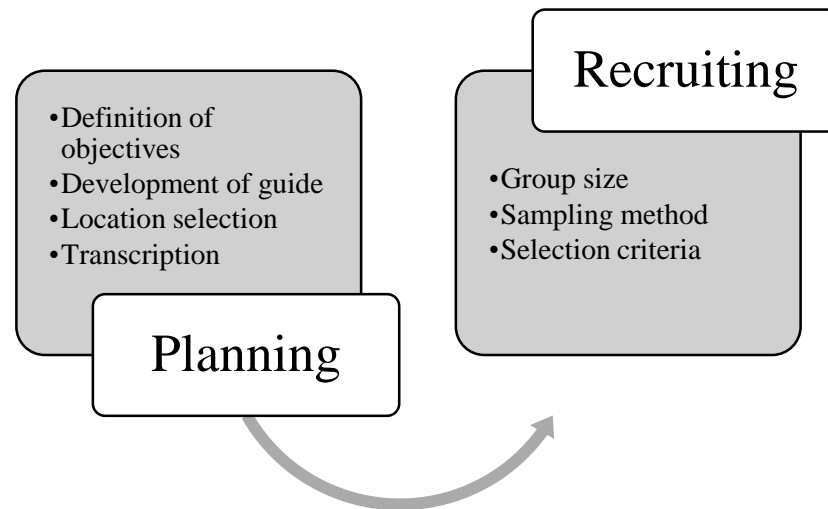
Three of the research objectives of this thesis are exploratory in nature, which suggest a qualitative approach to fulfil those objectives (Bryman, 2012). Focus groups were selected as method for data collection, and they can be defined as a guided group discussion between several participants at once (Lochrie, Curran, & O’Gorman, 2015). Focus groups were deemed appropriate for this research enquiry for two main reasons. Firstly, they allow for interactive discussion over a particular topic (Barbour, 2007). They will provide an initial qualitative view of the social influence factors that are considered to be affecting behaviour in this new context. Furthermore, the discussion in the focus group can help to identify other factors and moderators that might have not been identified through the literature review. Due to the context dependent nature of this research, gaining insight in the particular use of Facebook fan pages and motivations behind engagement behaviours are key elements to accomplish the research objectives that look to measure this phenomena. Secondly, focus groups can help to inform research design elements of the experiments that will take place in the quantitative section of this thesis (Barbour, 2007). The following section outlines the protocol that will be followed in the focus groups.

5.4 Focus group protocol

Two key elements of the research design of a focus group are planning and recruitment (Lochrie et al., 2015). Following the process suggested by Lochrie et al. (2015) the planning of the focus group started with a clear definition of the research objectives (section 6.2). From these objectives it was identified the need to enquiry whether the three types of immediacy that the literature in social impact theory were consciously relevant for consumers at the time to interact with Facebook fan pages. In addition, it was needed to identify other factors that may be driving engagement behaviours in these environments. From this process a focus group guide was developed (Appendix 8). A room at a local university was booked in order to conduct the focus group, and the room capacity of it was of 25 people. The location of the room was close to the target sample

of participants that this thesis was looking (i.e. university students). The sessions were recorded using a mobile phone, and consent was sought prior to starting the sessions and at the end of it, leaving participants with several occasions to opt-out from the research (Eysenbach & Till, 2001).

Table 24 Focus group process



Adapted from (Lochrie et al., 2015)

Participants were chosen using a purposeful sampling approach, which is a common way of sampling in focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Participants were chosen based on different levels of intensity usage of the platform, and the level of intensity usage was measured using Ellison et al.'s (Ellison et al., 2007) Facebook Intensity usage scale which has been used in other studies looking at consumer behaviour in social media environments (Ellison et al., 2007; Jahn & Kunz, 2012; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011). In total two focus groups with 6 postgraduate students in each one of them, which is an appropriate sample size for this type of method (Lochrie et al., 2015; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2006). Sample characteristics of the both focus groups are summarised in Table 25.

Table 25 Sample characteristics of focus groups

Focus Group 1		Focus Group 2	
Participants:	6	Participants:	6
Average age:	25	Average age:	25
Standard deviation:	2.87	Standard deviation:	3.21

The second stage in this thesis takes a quantitative approach to measure the effects of different forms of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours. The research design of this stage is developed in the following section.

5.5 Causal enquiry and its implications on selection of method

Following the critical realists approach discussed in Chapter 4, a causal enquiry underpins two of the four research objectives outlines in Table 23. Causal research explores the effect of a factor on another one (Bryman, 2012). However, the causality sought in this research departs from a critical realist perspective of causality (discussed in section 4.6) and accordingly it allows for a context-dependent and theory-laden analysis of the causal relationship. In this case, the research aims to measure the effect of immediacy over certain consumer engagement behaviours. Experiment is the chosen method in this research section as it is well-suited to investigate a cause-effect relationship among variables, as well as the controlled manipulation of independent variables and the measurement of its effects on one or many dependent variables (Freedman, 2005).

There are three characteristics that need to be present when establishing causal relationship: (1) the cause preceded the effect, (2) the cause is related to the effect, and (3) no other plausible alternative explanation for the effect other than the cause can be found (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Experiments are robust methods for establishing causal relationships because of the nature of their design and the controlled environment associated with the manipulation and measurement of both dependent and independent variables. Usually, in an experiment the researcher has control over how and when treatments are given, facilitating the existence of the first characteristic of causal relationships. Secondly, a correlational analysis is undertaken to see if there is a relationship with the manipulation of the cause and the changes that the effect generated,

and finally, the experimental design attempts to reject other plausible alternative explanations via a series of validation procedures discussed in the section about determination of treatment levels.

5.6 Stages in experimental design

The design of an experiment involves a series of steps, as illustrated in Figure 21, which presents the series five of interlinked steps that comprise the research design of this thesis, starting with hypotheses formulation and concluding with an analysis plan (Kirk, 2013). These steps are interrelated because the generation of hypotheses will set out the number of factors involved, as well as providing guidance on the experimental units and procedures that are necessary. The experimental design identifies the independent and dependent variables, as well as the rationale behind sample size and sample selection, the stimuli to which the experimental units will be subjected to and the way in which the data will be analysed. Following Kirk (2013) the next sub-sections develop each of the stages involved in experimental design and analysis.

Figure 21- Stages in experimental design and analysis



Source: (Kirk, 2013)

5.7 From research propositions to hypotheses formulation

Based on the investigation of the online settings conducted in Chapter 1, plus a review of the available theory in Chapters 2 and 3, a gap was identified in terms of how immediacy is tested in social media environments. The process of designing an experiment continues with the formulation of a statistical hypothesis from the research propositions, which is an essential part of statistical inference (Young, 1997). Statistical hypotheses are often statements that tend to be theory-driven, and that speak about expected values of population parameters (e.g. height, expected behaviour, etc.) or about the distributional form of a characteristic of interest (e.g. expected behaviour is normally distributed). The objective of the testing of these hypotheses will be to provide sufficient empirical evidence to falsify them. Statistical hypotheses differ from scientific ones, as they are stated as formulations testable via statistical inference. This is done by simplifying the question of interest into two competing claims (a null hypothesis or H_0 and an alternative hypothesis or H_1). The null hypothesis represents the theory being tested, whereas the alternative hypothesis relates to the statement to be tentatively accepted until more empirical evidence supports the findings or falsifies them.

When testing two hypotheses (H_0 and H_1) there are four alternatives, based on the choice made to reject or accept that hypothesis and the probability that the choice made was erroneous. These are known as Type I and Type II errors. The Type I error is considered to be the more serious, as that would involve rejecting a null hypothesis that is actually true. In statistical inference, the type of error is controlled via alpha (α), which is the maximum probability that this error has occurred. The opposite of a Type 1 error is a Type 2 error, which involves not rejecting a null hypothesis that is false. Typically, a decrease in the probability of one type of error would result in an increase of the other one.

5.8 Determination of treatments

An experimental treatment is defined as “the combination of levels, one from each treatment factor in the design” (Lee, 1975, p.46). A treatment factor needs to comply with

the following attributes: (1) the experimenter could assign any participant to any of the levels of the factor and (2) each level comprises explicitly distinguishable stimuli or a situation in the environment of the experimental unit (W. Lee, 1975). The definition of high and low treatments for each of the types of immediacy is in line with experimentation procedures first devised by Latané (Bibb Latané, 1981) when SIT was formulated. The addition of a control treatment, where participants do not receive any of the other treatments, is a common practice in experimental designs (Kirk, 2013). The presence of a control treatment contributes to the internal validity of the experiment. However it is worth noting that changes between a treatment and the control treatment do not necessarily provide evidence for the treatment effect, as there may be systematic differences across experimental units (Lee, 1975). Therefore the selection of experimental units with low systematic differences is advisable and will be discussed in the following section. Three studies are designed to measure the effects of the three different forms of immediacy, as this is an exploratory study looking to measure but not to generalise to different contexts.

Table 26- Definition of treatments of studies

Study	Treatment	Manipulation
1	High Physical immediacy	Fan Page and content from USA
	Low Physical immediacy	Fan Page and content from Scotland
	Control	Fan page
2	High Social immediacy	Fan Page content shared by friend
	Low Social immediacy	Fan Page content paid by Brand
	Control	Fan Page content
3	High Temporal immediacy	Fan Page content published “A few seconds ago”
	Low Temporal immediacy	Fan Page content published “Last month”
	Control	Fan Page content

For physical immediacy, the selection of treatments follows the work of several authors who looked at the effect in terms of social impact of interactions occurring at two geographically distant locations (Blaskovich, 2008; Chidambaram & Lai Lai Tung, 2005; Bassett & Latane, 1976). Using two different cities geographically distant is a common operationalization of high and low physical immediacy (Blaskovich, 2008). In order to ensure that the manipulation was strong enough (something that will be later verified through manipulation checks), and since the data collection would occur in Edinburgh, Edinburgh was chosen as the location where the post was to be published. Furthermore, the name of the brand also mentions that it is a Scottish brand. For the low physical immediacy treatment, the post mentions that the brand published it from a US location, plus the location of the brand is also highlighted in the brand name as a “US Brand”. The selection of an English speaking country that was physically distant as opposed to just a physically distant country was in order to reduce the effect of cultural differences.

In the case of social immediacy, the use of content coming from a known friend as opposed to a brand is a variation used by many studies measuring the effects of social distance on attitudes and behaviours. Several studies testing Construal Level Theory use this kind of treatment where a certain action is performed by someone that the target knows as opposed to someone that the target does not know (Fiedler, Haruvy, & Li, 2011; NiraTrope Liberman, 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010).

For temporal immediacy, the selection of treatment builds on the work of Sedikides and Jackson (Sedikides & Jackson, 1990) that used as its reference the time of interaction with the target. In this case, the way time interaction was manipulated is by highlighting when the interaction actually occurred. For the high temporal immediacy treatment, the post mentioned that it was published “A few seconds ago”. The way this information is displayed is in line with the way the platform analysed in this study displays the temporal immediacy of posts.

5.9 Determination of experimental units

An experimental unit is defined as the “entity that is assigned to an experimental condition independently of other entities” (Kirk, 2013). The experimental units in both phases are individual participants, more specifically university students. There are some considerations that need to be taken into account when using university students as experimental units. Firstly the benefits of using students is that they provide a homogeneous sample. Homogeneity of experimental units (participants) contributes to the reduction of systematic differences (enhancing internal validity of the experiment), and this is one of the reasons why the choice of students as experimental units is widely accepted in experimental research (Peterson, 2001; Calder, Phillips, & Tybout, 1981).

Secondly, there is a distinction between designing research for application compared to conducting research for theory testing. In the former, the experimenter should attempt to replicate as many elements as the real conditions where the phenomenon under study takes place, and this can include heterogeneity of experimental units (Calder et al., 1981). However, in the case of theory testing, homogeneity of experimental units is a valid choice, and often leads to more homogeneous samples, compared to using non-student participants (Seltman, 2012; Peterson, 2001; Calder et al., 1981). There are, of course, limitations resulting from this choice. There is some evidence that students vs. non-student population that effect sizes derived from student populations frequently differed from non-student subjects in terms of direction and magnitude (Peterson, 2001). However, as this study’s objective is to test theory, the choice of student participants is valid, keeping in mind the limitations of this choice in generalizability of the findings.

Section 2: Experimental procedures

5.10 Section introduction

This section explains how participants are going to be recruited, how data will be collected in the experimental setting, and the type of procedure that will be followed to allocate each participant to their treatments.

5.11 Experimental procedures: recruitment

Participants were recruited from a first year course of management at university in Edinburgh. Recruitment for the pilot test was carried out using paper based advertising, as well as via tutorials. Recruitment for the three main studies was done using the 15 minutes prior to the commencement of a lecture in a Business Research skills and Management course. The incentive for participation in the pilot test was the chance to win a £20 voucher. The incentive for students in the main studies was to experience first-hand an experiment (relevant for Business Research Skills course as part of their syllabus) and also the possibility to win a £30 voucher. The ethical implications of offering financial incentives for the pilot test and the main studies are further discussed in Section 5.4.5.

5.12 Experimental procedures: data collection online vs. paper based

The different studies and pre-test used both online and paper-based methods for collecting data. The pilot test was applied online-and through a paper-based survey to collect the data. Each one has its advantages and limitations at the moment of implementation. The learning focus at this stage was on identifying the limitations or aspects that the author believed could improve the collection of data. Online-based experiments allow for limited control of the environment and in the pilot test run in this thesis these also yielded lower response rates than the paper-based one (Birnbbaum, 2000). When data collection was carried out using the paper-based instrument in a large group of people, control over participants was limited and subject to exchange of information between participants.

Corrective measures were taken in both modalities of data collection to decrease these limitations. The main three studies used a paper-based survey to collect data because of the lower response rate that was achieved when the survey was conducted online under the current research design. However, it was important to make sure that no differences were found in terms of measurement variability between the two modes. There is growing evidence that there is no significant variability in measurements when surveys are applied in a paper-based mode vs. online-based mode (C.-C. Wang, Liu, Cheng, & Cheng, 2013; Wijndaele et al., 2007). This was further supported by an analysis of variance test that was conducted in both the sample that used online-based survey and paper-based survey. The results showed no significant differences between paper-based survey ($M= 2.1$) and online-based surveys ($M=2.22$, $F(2,32)=0.515$, $p=0.63$) for the intended consumer engagement behaviours being measures. Thus it was determined that a paper-based survey would provide similar measurements as an online-based survey in this context.

5.13 Experimental procedures: assignment of participants

Random assignment is the way participants are split across conditions. This is a procedure that allocates each participant randomly to each of the conditions (Kirk, 2013). Random assignment eliminates the potential systematic differences across treatment conditions due to extraneous factors associated with characteristics of the test units (Keppel, 1991). As mentioned earlier, homogeneity of the unit experiments is key when theory testing. However, variations between groups that are considered homogeneous may still exist. Random assignment reduces, to a greater extent, the effect of extraneous factors affecting the results of the experiment (Seltman, 2012). Therefore students will be allocated randomly to each of the treatments in both phases. Each participant only received one treatment, making both experiments between-subject designs. As summarised in Table 27, there are certain advantages and disadvantages of using a between-subject design.

Table 27- Within subject vs. between subjects

	Within Subjects	Between Subjects
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer subjects are needed as each subject is tested twice;• You have more control over confounding variables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is less risk of practice or fatigue effects;• There is less risk of data loss due to drop-out as subjects are only measured once.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subjects may drop out, not completing the second condition and so rendering the data from their first condition unusable;• Subjects can suffer from practice or fatigue effects when tested twice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twice as many subjects are required;• You have less control over confounding variables.

Source: (Bryman, 2012)

5.14 Ethical considerations for experimentation

This section focuses on the ethical issues that may arise from conducting an online and offline experiments. According to Bryman (2012), some of the ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when conducting social research are the potential harm that can result to the participants when doing research, consensual participation in the experiment, the management of privacy of the subjects and whether any deception is being used to conduct this research.

5.14.1 Avoiding harm

Harm in experimental research in social sciences is not limited to physical effects (Eynon, Fry, & Schroeder, 2008). Harm in social sciences experiments can extend to psychological, social and economic damage (Israel & Hay, 2006). In this matter, Baker et al. (S. M. Baker, Gentry, & Rittenburg, 2005) identify three key themes to consider in

order to avoid generating harm to participants: (1) factors that increase the incidence of vulnerability, (2) the actual experience of vulnerability that is experienced by lack of control and (3) responses to vulnerability, including coping mechanisms and impact on the self. In these respects, efforts were made to communicate to participants that no financial, social, or psychological harm would result from their participation in this research. The fact that the participants of the studies were students, and that the lecturers allowed students to take part in the study, might give the impression to students that they have to participate or there could be negative repercussions that are not directly financial or physical. To minimise this risk, the participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and that it was independent from the coursework they were participating.

5.14.2 Lack of control

In terms of lack of control, this risk was minimised by giving the students the chance to answer the questions voluntarily, and no control measures were enforced to make sure that they answered the survey. Thus, students who did not fill in the survey were not penalised by the researcher. In terms of the appearance of coping mechanisms and impact on the self, the risk of these outcomes were mitigated by adhering to the approval of the Ethics committee and by asking for feedback on the potential harm for each of the survey to a panel of doctorate students. To the knowledge of the researcher, no potential harm can affect the participants of either of the two phases (Kirk, 2013).

5.14.3 Participant consent

In terms of consent for participation in this research, all the participants were asked twice for consent to take part in this study. This double verification of participation was carried out because deception was being used in the form of a cover story using fake research objectives, in order to increase internal validity. Thus, consent would be given by participants to an experiment without completely knowing what the experiment is measuring. After treatment and demand effects were measured, a full disclosure of the experiment's purpose was given to all participants. It is at this point that a second consent

form was given to the participants, in the form of opt-out alternatives, after being made aware of the real intentions of the study.

5.14.4 Deception in experiments

Strongly linked to the previous ethical consideration is the use of deception via a cover story. Deception in experimental research is a common practice, as it allows the researcher to reduce threats to internal validity such as demand effects, and compliance with/deviance from the researcher's objectives once the real purpose of the research is known by the participant (Kirk, 2013). Any ethical conflicts regarding the use of deception in this study were intended to be alleviated by providing full disclosure of the purpose of this research once knowledge of the purpose did not affect the measurement of the impact of the condition.

Privacy concerns are also addressed in the design of both experimental phases. The first concern is possible identification of the participant from the information provided in the experiment. Some demographic information is requested by the data collection instrument (e.g. age, gender, time living in a specific place). However, the likelihood of being recognised by this information is low, and little harm is associated with this. In addition, those participants who wished to know more about the results or were interested in receiving the financial incentives related to participation in the study could leave their email address, which is, of course, an element that could help identify a participant. Two measures were taken in order to ensure privacy in this case. The first one was the storage of this information in a password secured computer within Heriot-Watt University and at the home of the researcher. The second one was that the contact information was not included in the database to be share with any third party, and was only available to the researcher, and supervisors.

5.14.5 The use of incentives in experiments

In addition to the ethical considerations stated by Bryman (2012), this methodology involves the use of incentives in order to increase participation of a wider range of individuals. Incentives are employed as a preferred tool of policy in many areas of public life, from bonuses for teachers meant to ensure accountability in education to inducements for businesses to locate in a particular city or tax deductions for charitable contributions (Grant & Sugarman, 2004). In experimental research, the use of incentives is a common practice, and in research with students usually takes form of financial and non-financial incentives (Kirk, 2013). However, the use of incentives can be manipulative, even when the incentives cannot be characterized as outright blackmail. These sorts of incentives are sometimes termed “undue influence.”

Undue influence comes about in two quite different ways. Firstly, a person can be said to exercise undue influence when that person exerts power that he or she rightly wields in one area in an area in which he or she ought not to have any particular power—for example, when a person with money or fame influences political outcomes, jumps a queue, or receives special privileges to the detriment of others. In this case, it is the person who is unduly influential; he or she gets something undeserved at others’ expense (Walzer, 1983). Undue influence of this sort—trading on power in one sphere to influence outcomes in another—is often associated with dependency relationships. In the context of experimental research in social sciences, an example of undue influence would be a situation where a management professor gives students extra credit for agreeing to participate as subjects in research.

This is undue influence because grades, which should reflect learning in the course, are being given for a different purpose, and the teacher is using his or her legitimate authority to grade students’ work on its merits to secure an entirely unrelated benefit for himself or herself. If the currency is grades, both the teacher and the students receive benefits they do not rightly deserve. In these circumstances, it would be better, ethically, to offer money, in order to separate the incentive from the teacher’s academic authority. For this reason, financial incentives in the form of prize draws for participating in the study were

used as the incentive in these studies, rather than assigning extra marks to students who participate in the two research phases.

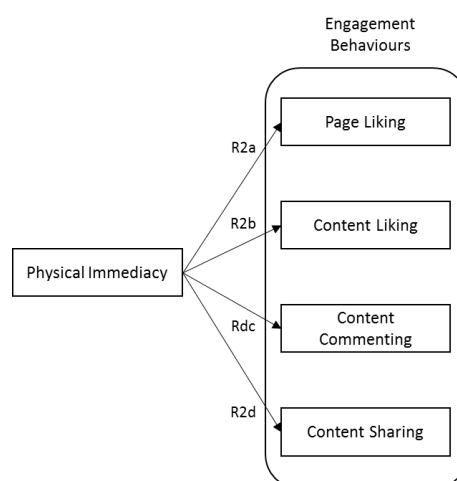
In addition to this, students were made aware that no extra credits would be earned (or lost) if they decided to take part in any of the three studies (or not). Students who did not wish to participate had the choice to leave the survey blank or to explicitly indicate that they did not wish to participate, at any time while filling it in. No enforcement was put in place to ensure that any student given a survey had completed it. This was done in this way as, due to the configuration of the lecture theatres, some students might be unable to leave the room if they did not wish to participate if they were sitting in a place where other students were participating. Students in this situation were asked to remain in their seats while the others finished their survey.

Section 3: Research studies

5.15 Study 1: Physical immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours

This section introduces in more detail the plan for the procedures and analysis involved in the implementation of Study 1. In Figure 22, the relationships hypothesised between the independent variable (physical immediacy) and the dependent variables (engagement behaviours) are shown.

Figure 22- Physical immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours



5.16 Experimental design

Study One uses a one factor experimental design. As discussed in section 6.3.5, the independent variable (physical immediacy) has three levels of treatments. An objective of one-factor design is to determine whether the response for the dependent variable is significantly different at different factor levels. Due to the nature of the consumer engagement behaviours being used in this experiment, two other factors are also controlled, as they could also influence the results of the study. These are (1) intensity of usage and commitment to the platform (Facebook), which might moderate the propensity to perform the measured dependent variable (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Smock et al., 2011) and (2) product involvement, as this might affect the willingness to interact with the brand (Chang & Chuang, 2011).

5.17 Independent variable

Immediacy in SIT represents the distance relationship that exists between a source and a target (Nowak et al., 1990). From a consumer perspective, immediacy is therefore a set of factors that represent the relationship between a brand and the consumer. This relationship can be in terms of physical immediacy. Physical immediacy is learned earlier than other types of immediacies, and can be more clearly detected, less ambiguous and easier to communicate about than temporal or social immediacy (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

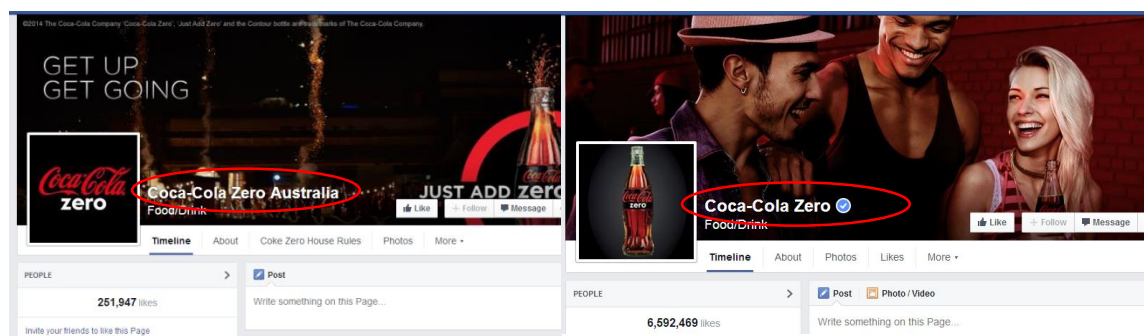
For this study, physical immediacy was the independent variable and it was manipulated by showing the participants a message coming from two fictitious brand fan pages of soft drinks. Geographical distance was used to operationalise physical immediacy. Other studies have used geographical immediacy as a proxy, for example, the studies of Bassett and Latané (Bassett & Latane, 1976) who used two geographically distant cities as a manipulation for high and low immediacy. In the online context, Miller and Brunner (2008) also used two geographically distant cities as a proxy of immediacy. However, as both studies were based in the US, where distances between a city in the east coast vs. the west coast are involve by a 4 hour time difference and over 2000 miles, in the present UK

context, two different countries were selected. Due to the fact that to emulate a similar geographical distance for participants living in Edinburgh would mean selecting a country with a different language, it was decided instead to choose a country that is geographically distant but also with a shared language and culture. This is the case of the UK and the US (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990). Geographical segmentation of online presence is already present across many international brands, as illustrated in Figure 23.

Figure 23- Geographically segmented online presence

Australia (High physical immediacy)

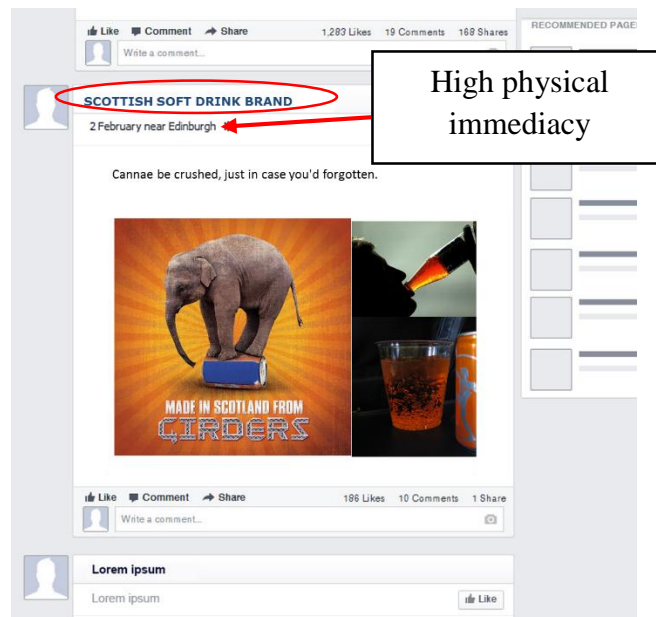
Global (Low physical immediacy)



Source: Facebook, 2014

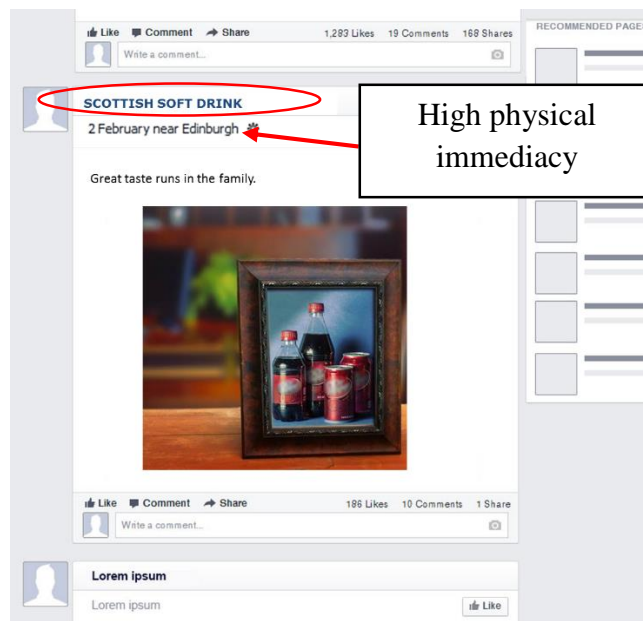
Thus the choice was made to use one fan page that was Scottish based (high immediacy) another based in the US (low immediacy), whilst the control manipulation did not mention anything about the physical location of brand (Figure 24, 27 and 28 illustrate these differences). Soft drinks were used because they represent a well-established category in the UK (Mintel, 2014) and are widely available in vending machines, supermarkets, and smaller shops. There has been a tendency as well for brands in this category to develop a geographically segmented online presence (Figure 23); however there is lack of empirical evidence that this practice benefits the levels of engagement behaviours with brands. Two different fan pages were developed within the same survey, hence a participant in any condition would be indicating his or her intentions to engage with the fan page twice. The inclusion of multiple measurements of the same activity to familiarise the participant with the process in the experiment is a common practice to increase the internal validity of an experiment (Abdi, 2009).

Figure 24- Study 1: high physical immediacy condition



Fan page 1

High physical immediacy



Fan page 2

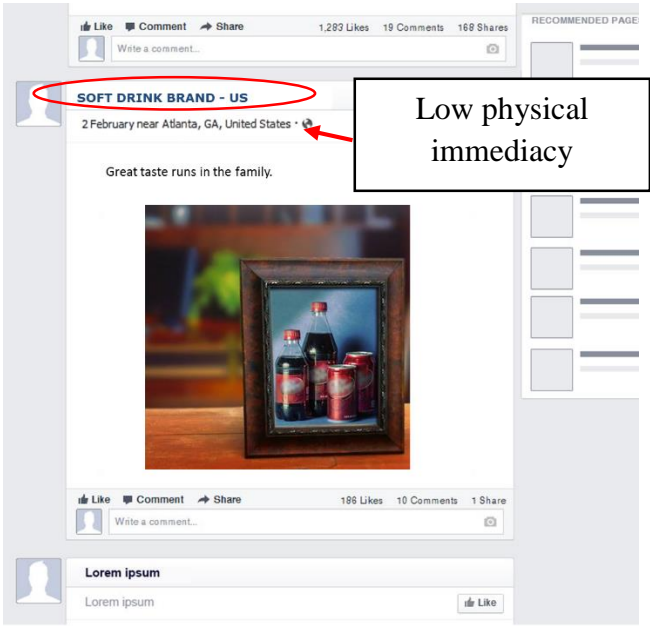
High physical immediacy

Figure 25- Study 1: low physical immediacy condition



Fan page 1

Low physical immediacy



Fan page 2

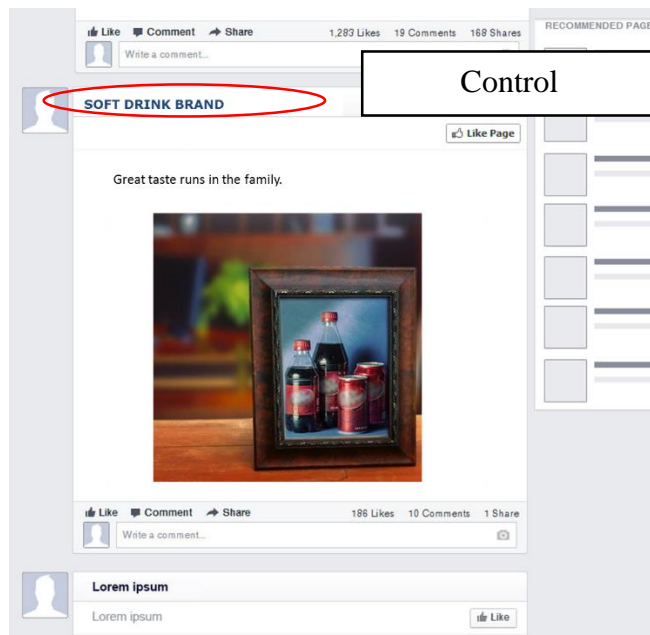
Low physical immediacy

Figure 26- Study 1: control condition



Fan page 1

Control



Fan page 2

Control

5.18 Dependent variable

5.18.1 Consumer engagement behaviours

In this research, consumer engagement behaviours are defined as a behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm beyond purchase (Van Doorn et al., 2010b). These manifestations can take the form of word-of-mouth activities, sharing, and commenting on both user-generated and brand-generated content. In this particular study, consumer engagement behaviours are operationalized using as variables the simulated intention to (1) like the post from the brand, (2) comment on the post of the brand, (3) share the post of the brand, and (4) like the fan page of the brand.

Table 28- Measurements of CEBs on Facebook

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely

The scale used to measure the intention to act was based on a single item question measuring each of the featured interactions, using a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from "Very Unlikely" to "Very Likely", modified from a Facebook feature use by Cvijikj and Mchahelles (2013). The variation from actual behaviour to intentions is best suited to this research design, as these are unknown brands; thus intentions to perform the activities were measured instead. Intention simulation is considered as a valid approach to measure actual behaviour, since it approximates real situations (Francis et al., 2004).

5.18.2 On the use of a single item scale

The use of multiple items scales has become a standard in academic marketing research (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003; Viswanathan, 2005). This is underpinned in part by the increased adoption of structural equation modelling techniques that favour this type of scales for the advantages associated to these type of scale in terms of dimensionality, reliability and validity (Steenkamp & Van Trijp, 1991). However, this view has been challenged by some academics that argue for better single item measure instead of commonly used multiple item measures (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2009). There is empirical evidence that suggest that in some cases, single item measures provide the same level of reliability than multiple item ones, with the added benefit of parsimony in academic research. In cases where the construct is very concrete, as in the case of intentions to perform a concrete behaviour as described in this thesis, it is reasonable to expect that there is a virtually unanimous agreement across respondents as to what characteristic is being measured (Rossiter, 2002). In addition, single items scales are also suitable in exploratory research situations where typically weaker effect sizes are expected (H. Lee, Delene, Bunda, & Kim, 2000; Stebbins, 2001). Since this thesis objectives are looking to measure the effects on intended behaviours in a specific context, and does not aim for generalisation of these effects, it is deemed appropriate to proceed with a single item to measure this type of intentions.

5.19 Moderating and confounding variables

5.19.1 Facebook intensity usage

The context of this research is social media websites, in particular the social networking site Facebook. The participants' usage of this kind of platform was measured using the Facebook intensity scale employed by (Smock et al., 2011; Yoder & Stutzman, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007), with a modified scale from 1 to 7 to keep consistency with the other scales.

Table 29- Intensity of usage of Facebook

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

5.19.2 Product Involvement

As users were exposed throughout the studies to different categories of products, an element that could change among users is the involvement that they had with each of these products. In order to control for this external factor that may influence the results, a measurement of category involvement was introduced, using Zaichowsky's reduced scale for involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985). As discussed in section 2.22, there is some evidence that the level of product involvement in computer-mediated communication affects the judgement that a target can make about an item of advertising (Nicovich, 2005). Furthermore, involvement can also affect the level of persuasion that a source can have over a target (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981), therefore affecting the social impact of the messages. For this reason, involvement is also measured in this study, as a confounding variable.

Table 30- Involvement measurements

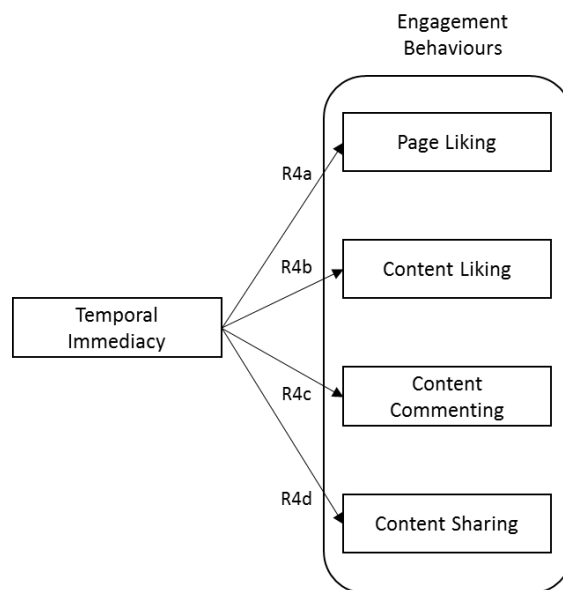
important							unimportant
boring							interesting
relevant							irrelevant
exciting							unexciting
means nothing							means a lot to me
appealing							unappealing
fascinating							mundane
worthless							valuable
involving							uninvolving
not needed							needed

Source: (Zaichkowsky, 1985)

5.20 Study 2: Social immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours

The second type of immediacy being tested in this thesis is social immediacy. Figure 27 illustrates the hypothesised relationships between this independent variable and the engagement behaviours.

Figure 27- Social immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours



5.21 Independent variable

For this study, social immediacy was the independent variable and was manipulated by showing the participants a message coming from two different sources. High immediacy was operationalised by showing messages being shared by the participant's friend, whereas low immediacy was represented by showing messages being paid for by the brand. The control condition did not mention if the message was shared by a friend or paid for. The operationalisation of social immediacy in terms of the social distance that exists between a target and the source of influence has been extensively used both within SIT and across other theories. For example, friends vs. acquaintances was used by an empirical study looking at the effects of immediacy on alcohol consumption (Pedersen et al., 2008). In the online context, and more closely related to the context of this study, advertising messages coming from friends vs. messages that were only sponsored by the brand were used to operationalise social immediacy by Li et al. (2012). This study follows a similar operationalisation of social immediacy.

The selection of coffee shops as a context in this research comes because this is another industry that is well established (5,531 stores available in the UK) with 1 in 5 of the consumers surveyed visiting coffee shops daily and with predictable consumption patterns (Hospitality and Catering News, 2014). Furthermore, this is a category that was also available in the facilities where this research was conducted, with multiple branded coffee chains available, therefore increasing the likelihood that participants were users of them. Figure 28, 31 and 32 illustrate the two fan pages that were developed for this study, and a more detailed view of them can be seen in Appendix 2. Two measurements of intentions to engage with the Fan page were also taken.

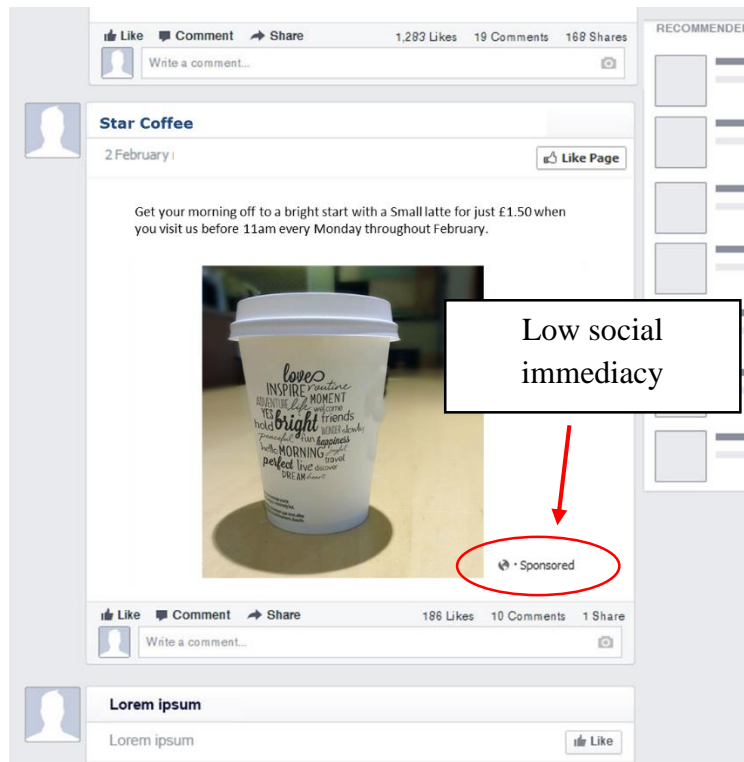
A screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top, the post is from a user whose profile picture is a silhouette, with the name 'YOUR FRIEND' circled in red. A red arrow points from a text box on the right to this name. The post shows a photo of a Starbucks coffee cup with a handwritten-style message: 'love inspire moment YES bright perfect live dream'. The post has 1,283 Likes, 19 Comments, and 168 Shares. Below the photo is a caption about a morning discount. At the bottom, there is a 'Like' button and a comment box. On the right side of the image, there is a black box with the text 'High social immediacy'.

High social immediacy



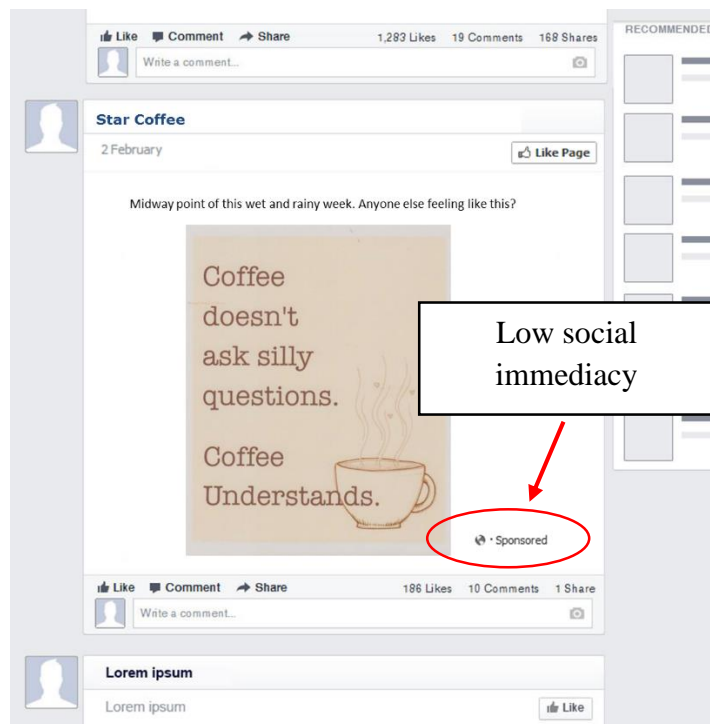
High social immediacy

Figure 29- Study 2: low social immediacy condition



Fan page 1

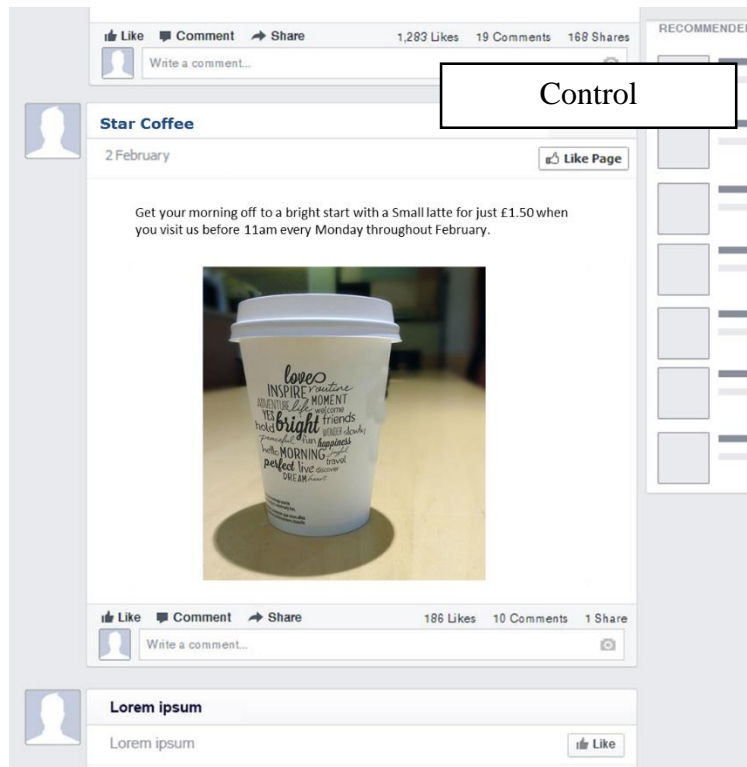
Low social immediacy



Fan page 2

Low social immediacy

Figure 30- Study 2: control condition



Fan page 1

Control



Fan page 2

Control

5.22 Dependent variable

Consumer engagement behaviours

Consumer engagement behaviours were operationalized using as variables the simulated intention to (1) like the post from the brand, (2) comment on the post of the brand, (3) share the post of the brand, and (4) liking the fan page of the brand. The scale used to measure the intention to act was based on a single item question measuring each of the featured interaction using a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely” modified from Facebook feature use by Cvijikj and Mchahelles (2013).

5.23 Moderating / Confounding Variables

Similar variables were believed to affect the intentions to engage with the content were presented in the experiment. The degree of Intensity of Usage of Facebook was considered a moderating factor influencing the engagement intentions of users. The level of involvement with the product category used in the experiment was considered as a confounding variable.

5.23.1 Intensity of Facebook usage

The context where this research is social media websites, in particular the social networking site Facebook. The usage of this type of platform was measured using the Facebook intensity scale applied by (Smock et al., 2011; Yoder & Stutzman, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007).

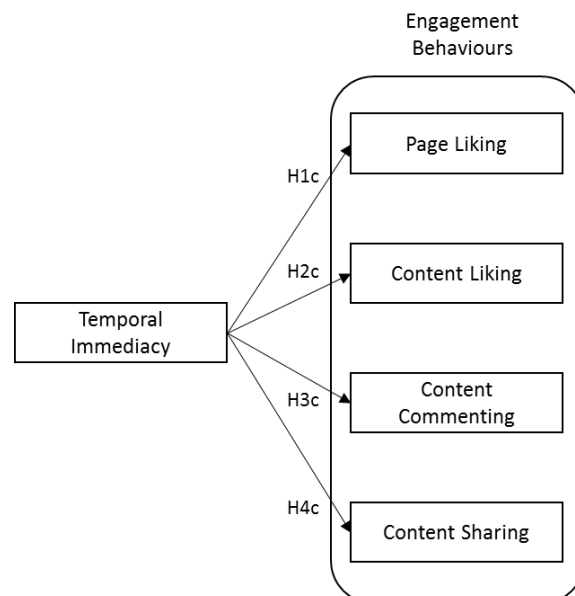
5.23.2 Involvement

As users were exposed throughout the studies to different categories of products, an element that could change among users is the involvement that they had with each of these categories. In order to control for this external factor that may influence the results, a measurement of category involvement was introduced using Zaichowsky's reduced scale for involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985).

5.24 Study 3: Temporal immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviours

Finally, Study Three operationalises immediacy in the form of temporal immediacy. Figure 31 below illustrates the hypothesised relationships between the dependent (engagement behaviours) and the independent variable (temporal immediacy).

Figure 31- Temporal immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours

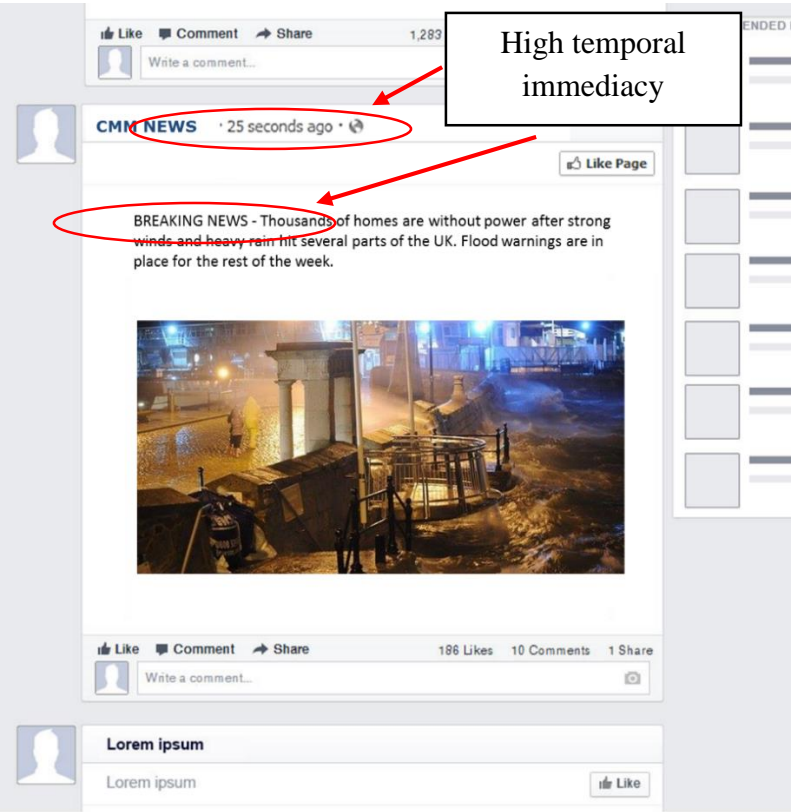


5.25 Independent variable

Temporal immediacy is the independent variable and was manipulated by showing the participants the time the post was published when it appeared on their Facebook wall. High immediacy was operationalised by showing messages posted a few seconds ago, whilst low immediacy was from posts published last month. The control condition did not mention when the post was published. The use of the time that interaction occurred as an operationalisation of temporal immediacy is used both within SIT studies (Sedikides & Jackson, 1990) and in other studies with different theoretical underpinnings (NiraTrobe Liberman, 2007; Day & Bartels, 2008, 2008; Trope & Liberman, 2010).

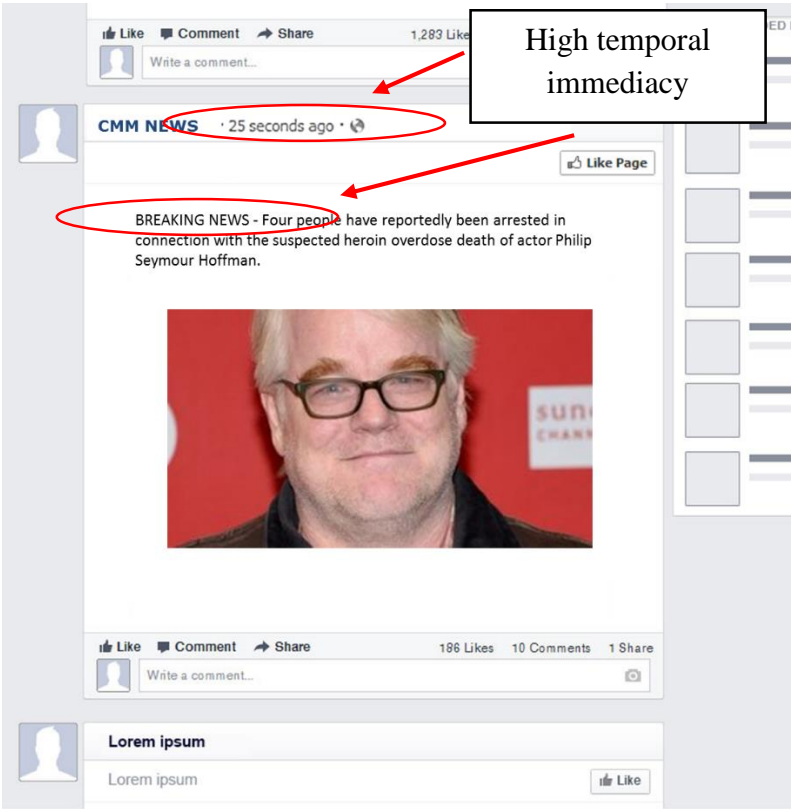
The use of news services suppliers was selected for three reasons. Firstly traditional newspaper suppliers have been previously used in other social influence experiments to measure the effect of immediacy on social impact (Bassett & Latane, 1976). Secondly, the nature of this industry makes temporal immediacy particularly relevant, and it is a category that is very active in social media channels (BBC, 2014). Thirdly, the use of Internet to access news is increasing, with two thirds of adults in the UK now accessing news via this medium (Mintel, 2010).

Figure 32- Study 3: high temporal immediacy



Fan page 1

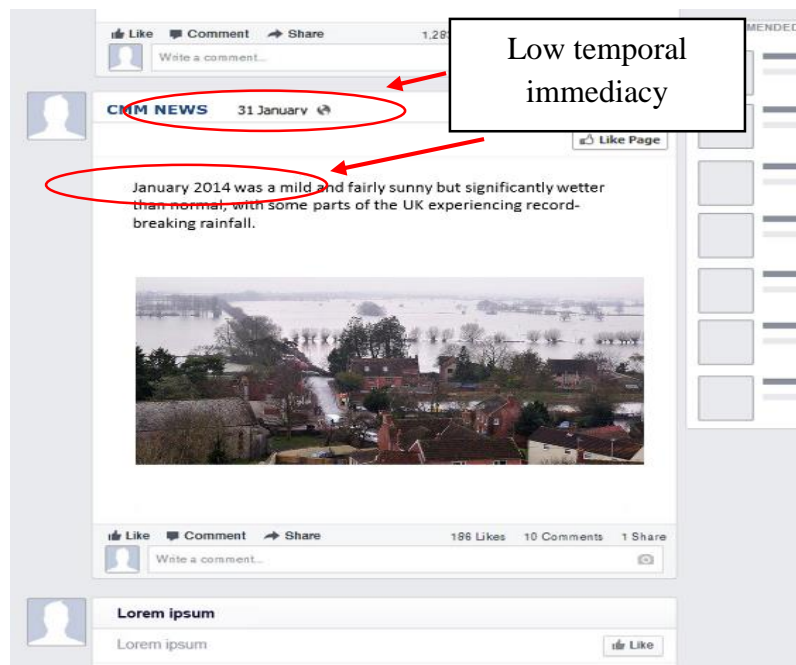
High temporal
immediacy



Fan page 2

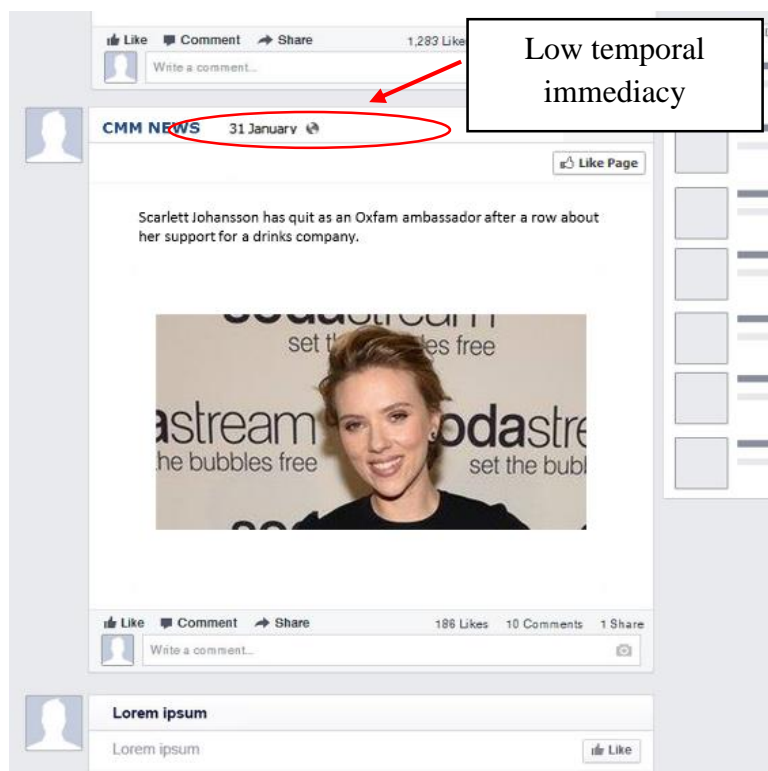
High temporal
immediacy

Figure 33- Study 3: low temporal immediacy



Fan page 1

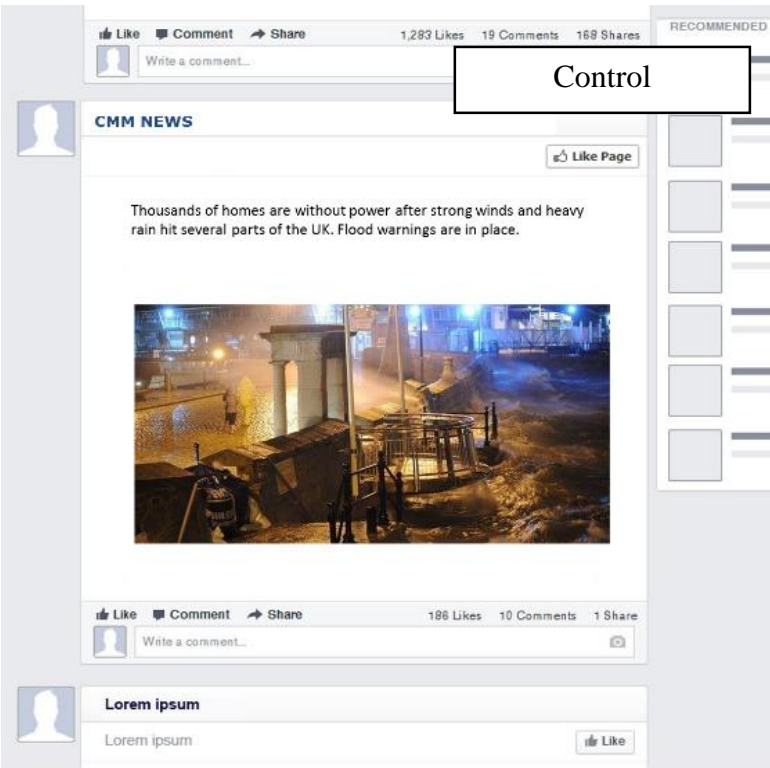
Low temporal immediacy



Fan page 2

Low temporal immediacy

Figure 34- Study 3: high temporal immediacy



Fan page 1

Control



Fan page 2

Control

5.26 Dependent variable

Consumer engagement behaviours

As in Study 1, consumer engagement behaviours are operationalized using as variables the simulated intention to (1) like the post from the brand, (2) comment on the post of the brand, (3) share the post of the brand, and (4) like the fan page of the brand. The scale used to measure the intention to act was based on a single item question measuring each of the featured interactions using a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”, modified from Facebook feature use by Cvijikj and Mchahelles (2013).

5.27 Moderating/confounding variables

5.27.1 Intensity of Facebook use

The context of this research is social media websites, in particular the social networking site Facebook. The usage of this type of platform was measured using the Facebook intensity scale.

5.27.2 Involvement with the category

As users were exposed throughout the studies to different categories of products, an element that could change among users is the involvement that they had with each of these categories. In order to control for this external factor, a measurement of category involvement was introduced using Zaichowsky’s (1985) reduced scale for involvement.

5.28 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has described the research strategy and research design used to answer the research question of this thesis and provided supportive evidence for the use mixed methods that included focus groups and experimental design as the preferred methods for data collection. Drawing on the research propositions developed in Chapter 4, section 1 also linked those research propositions with the determination of the level of treatments and the definition of experimental units.

This chapter also presented the procedures for the focus groups and the experiments. It was determined that a student population was the ideal sample as it provided a homogenous group of participants for a theory testing research study. It was also determined that a paper based survey can be an appropriate tool to investigate engagement behaviours as the results obtained in this modality do not change significantly from other studies using online surveys (Birnbbaum, 2000) , and due to the sample characteristics and the way the researcher had access to the participants this was the most appropriate modality for the data collection tool. This chapter has also discussed the measures taken to ensure that this research observes the ethical boundaries of academic research in the social sciences. In particular, considerations on how to avoid harm, lack of control, and participant consent were discussed and put in place for the data collection process. The implications of the use of deception and financial incentives were also discussed.

Finally, an outline of the research design is also provided in this chapter. Two focus groups and three studies measuring the effects of physical, social, and temporal immediacy are used to fulfil the research objectives of this thesis. Physical immediacy will be operationalised in terms of the geographical distance of the Facebook fan page and the participants, leading to Fan pages being presented that explicitly indicate that they are Scottish-based vs. US based. Social immediacy is operationalised in terms of social distance, and messages appear to be from a friend vs. a stranger source (the unknown brand). Finally, temporal immediacy is operationalised in terms of the recency of the messages shown. A message coming a few

seconds ago is the operationalisation of high temporal immediacy, whereas a message coming from last month is a low immediacy one. The next chapter presents the findings from the empirical research conducted in this thesis.

Chapter 6: Findings

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the results from the focus groups and three studies that explored and measured the effects of different forms of immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours with Facebook fan pages, which form the empirical evidence for this thesis. An overview of the structure of this research as well as the treatments linked to each of the studies is presented in Table 31 below.

Table 31- Empirical studies and research propositions

Type of immediacy	Study	Treatment	Research propositions
All types	Focus groups	n/a	R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R5: Social influence factors can be moderated by context dependent variables.
Physical	Study 1	Fan pages in Scotland for high physical immediacy and in the US for low physical immediacy.	R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R2: Physical immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R6: Product involvement can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R7: Platform intensity usage can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.
Social	Study 2	Organic posts coming from friends for high social immediacy and Sponsored posts from low social immediacy.	R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R3: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R6: Product involvement can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings. R7: Platform intensity usage can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.

Temporal	Study 3	An event occurring a few seconds ago for high temporal immediacy and an event that occurred last month for low temporal immediacy.	<p>R1: Immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.</p> <p>R4: Temporal immediacy can have a positive effect on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.</p> <p>R6: Product involvement can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.</p> <p>R7: Platform intensity usage can moderate the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media settings.</p>
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Firstly, a series of focus groups were conducted in order to enquire on the motivations behind Facebook fan pages in general. Then the investigation used the theory of social impact (Latane, 1981) as a guide to determine the elements that are relevant in terms of different forms of immediacies (i.e. physical, social and temporal). This part of empirical research is aimed to be more exploratory in nature, and looks as well at different moderating elements that may influence the interactions between users and fan pages.

Study 1 measures the effect of physical immediacy on intended engagement behaviours. Physical immediacy is manipulated in the form of where the Facebook fan page is located. The experiment uses Scotland and the USA as manipulations of physical immediacy, as discussed in Section 5.17.1. As the entire sample in the study is located in Scotland, high immediacy is present when the subjects are exposed to the Scottish based Fan pages, whereas low immediacy is present when they are exposed to the US based fan pages. Physical immediacy is proposed to have a positive effect on all intended consumer engagement behaviour. This is in line with other studies using physical (geographical) distance as a proxy of immediacy, which have found similar effects (e.g. Miller and Cryss Brunner, 2008; Sedikides and Jackson, 1990).

Study 2 measures the effect of social immediacy on similar intended engagement behaviour. As discussed in Section 5.21.1, the manipulation of social immediacy was carried out by showing participants brand-related messages coming from a participant's friend in the high

immediacy condition. Low immediacy in this case is when subjects see a sponsored message being paid by the brand. This is in line with how other studies of social immediacy (Blaskovich, 2008; Fiedler et al., 2011) have achieved this manipulation and also a common way to display sponsored messages in the platform used as context for this study.

Finally, Study 3 measures the effect of temporal immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours with Facebook fan pages. In this study, the content of the page relates to events occurring in the near past (operationalised as showing a message being posted “A few seconds ago”) compared to events occurring in a more distant past (last month). As with Studies 1 and 2, higher levels of intended consumer engagement with the page are expected for the high immediacy condition.

6.2 Exploration of the relationship of Fan page immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours

The main goal of the focus groups was to explore the possible effects of immediacy on the engagement behaviours of consumers with Facebook fan pages. A secondary goal was to also identify other social influence factors that consumers find important when interacting with brands, which can give some context to the results of the empirical results from the experimental designs that will be developed later in this chapter.

6.2.1 Engagement with brands on Facebook

Following the procedures outlined in section 5.4, the focus groups started with some ice breaking conversation regarding general behaviour on the platform. While speaking the level of intensity of usage, some participants acknowledged that they engage actively with brands and content on the platform. For example, participant 3 said:

“I’m a heavy user when it comes to Facebook, I engage with a lot of posts, I comment, I like, but I don’t tweet, I don’t have the app”. Participant 3 (Male, 24 years old)

For other participants engagement was divided into automatic and active engagement. Participant 2 said that he sometimes just liked the pages of brands that appeared in his newsfeed as an unconscious reflex, without really knowing what the page was about or assessing its content. The reasons that he gave was that we feared to miss out with promotions or company activities around him:

“Sometime I follow brands just unconsciously, unconscious liking. It’s like an automatic reflex, I just follow five to six brands in one go when they appear in my newsfeed. I don’t really care for the specifics, just that what they sell interest me. They might have something to say in the future that interests me” Participant 1 (Male, 23 years old).

The views of this participant were in line with the review of the literature in terms of participant engaging with content because the product or the product category was relevant to the user, which suggest that product involvement offline can also affect engagement in online settings (Norris, Weger, Bullinger, & Bowers, 2014).

When asked about their engagement with brands on Facebook, the majority of the participants in both focus groups acknowledged they do follow brands. Some of them (participant 1 and participant 4) even mentioned that they follow brands also on Instagram. Participant 1 was a heavy active follower of brands on Instagram, using Facebook as a secondary platform for this type of behaviour. From all the 12 participants in the two focus groups, only participant 7 did not follow any brands on Facebook and this was because he recently stopped using the platform. One of the heavy users of social media on focus group 2, participant 8, mentioned that she was a very enthusiastic user of social media, she liked to try new platforms, and when asked what platforms she used, she mention many that other users were not aware of or did not use. However, her engagement with brands was almost non-existent:

“I don’t really follow brands. They’re kind of useless. If I want to know something I will just go and search it online”. Participant 8 (female, 22)

Other participants now following brands behave in this way because they perceive they will get negative outcomes from doing so:

“I don’t actively follow brands because I don’t want to get spam”. Participant 2 (Male, 22 years old)

One of the participant only follow brands that he felt he could have a “real” interaction with. He felt that big brands can be impersonal and do not really care about the feedback that they can get on social media. For this participant, being able to know that he would get an answer back was very important:

“I only follow SME brands because I feel like I can have direct contact with them. Because for example if I follow a brand like Michael Kors and I send them a message they might not reply me because they have thousands of followers”. Participant 9 (male, 25 years old)

Another form of engagement identified by the participants was posting comments or pictures on the Facebook Fan page, and do not necessarily on posts only. Motivations appeared to be some form of recognition from the brand and other users of the brand community. For example, participant 12 mentioned:

I posted one picture of my home theatre system onto the page. Because earlier I was not really into hi-fi systems, and recently I did go with hi-fi systems, and the brand Martin Logan , it’s a very popular brand, so I just wanted to show them that I have the brand in my house now. So I just took a picture and posted it in their page. And they commented saying: -good”. Participant 12 (male, 28 years old).

In terms of specific engagement behaviours such as liking content, participants identify that liking was one of the most common engagements. However, liking content do not necessarily meant that they would follow that brand to keep getting more content or know more about the brand. Participant 2 mentioned the following:

“I like content. I like a post, I like a video, I like a comment, I sometimes share it, but that does not lead to me liking their page. I don’t feel the need to directly have any contact with them ever. I don’t think I need that. I don’t review products, I buy I use it, and if I am happy I just tell it to my friends. I don’t like a page because I don’t need to get in touch with them. I don’t know for what else would you like a page. I mean if you like a page or branded page you get newsfeed from them, that’s the reason you liked the page. Plus you can get in contact with them, they have your profile under their list. I just don’t like the page.” Participant 2

Finally, some users just do not enjoy brands being on Facebook, as they consider it as a space for real friends and family. For example, participant 4 did follow brands and interacted with them but in other platforms, whereas she had negative attitudes towards brands present on Facebook:

I prefer to follow brands on Instagram. I like Facebook because I want to see what my friends and family are doing, but I found that Facebook is not as clean as it used to be. Now is full of advertisement, if you go through your Facebook, you can see that is full of image, texts. So I don’t really like. If they try to make me buy something, they don’t get my attention. Participant 4

6.2.2 Physical immediacy

Participants were asked to rank all the elements present in a newsfeed that is brand related in terms of how important it is for them in order to decide to follow or not the brand. After aggregating all the results from the focus groups, the brand was at the top of their priorities. Followed by the number of likes, image, text, profile picture, number of comments, number of shares, physical location and the like page button. The physical location of the page appeared to be one of the least important elements in this exercise. However, when they were asked if that was important for them, there were some contradictions:

“Sometime it matters where this brand is located. Some people might think, oh, it’s made in the US. So for some it might be perceived to be better than it is here. Different places, different content. Different jokes. They can’t get the sentiment of people here”. Participant 1

“I had an experience in the US, not a lot of experience in the UK. So I can relate to the US one, not to the UK one”. Participant 8

“Not me, I would not pay more attention just because the page states that it is closer to me. For me it doesn’t matter where the content is coming from. If I like the brand, and if I am reading or watching a video or content from that favourite brand I would give it my attention irrespective from where it’s coming from. However, if it says go and get your personalised drink now, and if it’s not available here, then that would disappoint me but it doesn’t have any effect on my attention to that”. Participant 2

6.2.3 Social immediacy

According to social impact theory (Latane, 1981) the number of people around someone can exert influence over others. In the context of social media, likes and followers are a common currency used to determine popularity of content and online presence (Naylor et al., 2012). Some of the participants mentioned that they have followed brands on Facebook because of the perceived popularity of that brand in terms of likes. For others it was more about who they knew that was already liking that page that would influence them more towards following a brand:

“What might influence me is the number of people I know that already like it. Like 40 – 50 people following it, then I would think my friends are following this, there might be something to it”. Participant 2

“I would see which friends are following it, if they are close to me of course I can relate to them and ask them why are they following the brand, and that’s how you get

to know about the brand as well and then I would maybe like the page”. Participant 6

Another common way in which participants assessed content was to see how of their friends already liked that page. In fact, three participants in the focus groups acknowledged that they do that as common practice when looking at Facebook fan pages, but also at content outside Facebook that use the social plugin that the platform has.

There was some evidence in the focus group of how product and category involvement might affect the interaction that consumers have with the brand. For example, one of the participants mention that for certain categories, she is just more inclined to try it because she is keen on trying new things. The participant also acknowledge that her attitudes towards that place might be influence by her friends’ online support to it:

“I don’t see the relevance. Everything that is related to food I’ll just go and try it. When is like food things, I just say, why shouldn’t I just try this. And if seven people I already know are liking it, then I say ‘this must be good”. Participant 8

6.2.4 Temporal immediacy

Temporal immediacy in online environments is rather a fluid concept, especially since in social media synchronous and asynchronous communication exists within the same platform. Facebook posts can be a few days or weeks old and still appear at the top of the timeline of users due to popularity and levels of engagement. There were mixed feelings regarding temporal immediacy and its effects on attitudes and interaction towards the brand and the fan page. Mainly with inclination towards the relevance of the content and how relevant the brand is for that person:

“In terms of content, it depends on how relevant the post is now”. Participant 8

“It depends if a post is being reposted or not.” Participant 12

“I sometimes see some posts that keep getting like on a daily basis reappearing in my timeline... it does get a bit annoying. But not to the extent of me hating that brand where I go and unlike it”. Participant 2

When it comes to promotional activities that are carried online, there seems to be some positive effect from temporal immediacy, as it increases the perceived likelihood that they can still interact and win for that promotion:

“There was a post like two days ago where it said ‘find similarities between the two pictures and win an apple watch. So that day it attracted my attention. Then I clicked on it and it already had 640 comments. It doesn’t make sense for me to comment. If it was posted like one minute ago, it would attract my attention. And also if it is a brand that you like and you really want it”. Participant 12

6.2.5 Other factors influencing engagement behaviour

Some participants recognised that the content itself played a very important role on their engagement behaviours, content that lead to cognitive and emotional processes generate higher levels of interaction:

Sometimes I like content because the content had an effect on me, it had relevance to me. If it was a video I would share it with someone and like it because I would find it interesting. It could be intellectual reasons, it could be funny reasons, it could be like really stupid reasons...” Participant 2

“I would like it because it’s funny”. Participant 8

“If it makes sense (the content), I would like it”. Participant 12

“Depends on the content, if it’s rubbish I would not like it”. Participant 1

Brand content pushed to users through their friends, a concept known as online social advertising (Li et al., 2012), appeared to be well accepted by the participants of both focus groups. For example, participant 8 mentioned the following:

Sometimes I like brands because they come sponsored through my friends. Like if my friend tweeted about a brand, I'm not going to think about it, I'll just like it. When everyone talks about it I get curious, you just go and click it just to see what they're talking about. Participant 8

In her views, also there was a social influence aspect and fear of missing out (fomo) of knowing what their friends were liking and commenting on. This view was shared by other participants too:

I guess there is the aspect of fomo (fear of missing out). You want to know what your friends are talking about. Participant 5 (male, 29 years old)

"The amount of likes might make you follow it. Because that means that is very popular and I don't know about it." Participant 9

Aesthetics of the fan page and content of it appeared to be also important when assessing the quality, reputation and overall perception of an unknown brand. Several participants recognise that if the design does not meet their expectations in terms of visual appearance, it can have a negative impact on their interest for their brand and engagement with its content.

Promotional activities are sometimes perceived as deceiving tactics used by brands to increase the following base. Many in the two focus groups agreed with this view, thinking that sometimes it is hard to follow up on the promotions that are organised by some brands, but that still these promotional activities are a high motivation behind liking page behaviour. For example, Participant 2 mentioned:

"I am sure a lot of people would see the 'win a holiday anywhere' and like the page because sometimes these brands say like our page to win a free holiday and a lot of people do it then no one wins. Like win a Mercedes, win a BMW, win a fully funded

trip to Europe. People go mad like in pages. But I feel is just a marketing gimmick.
Participant 2

Before presenting the results from the main study, the following section reports a pilot study that was conducted previous to the main study.

6.3 Pilot study 1: physical immediacy

A pilot test was conducted prior to running the main research. Pilot tests are common can help detect problems in the implementation of larger studies and help improve the quality of the design of the main study (Prescott and Soeken, 1989). A sample of 32 participants were recruited from postgraduate and undergraduate students. Although several authors do not give any recommendation on the number of sample size when conducting pilot studies (Burns and Grove, 2005; Polit and Beck, 2004) at least ten participants or 10% of the final expected sample in the main study can be adequate for this type of studies (Nieswiadomy, 2002; Lackey and Wingate, 1998). Since the main study is expected to be conducted with 69 participants per study, the 10% rule would have led with a sample size smaller than 10 participants per condition, compromising the results that could be obtained from the pilot study.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions where physical immediacy of the concert venue they were assessing was in the same town as them (high immediacy), in London (low immediacy) or the physical location was not stated (control). The survey applied to participants can be found in Appendix 7 in this thesis. The participants were told that they were assessing the effect of text size and image size in social networking sites. Participants read the following information:

Please imagine that Facebook is allowing brands to select the size of the images and text in their posts. An established London-based / Edinburgh-based concert venue is trying to determine the ideal balance between the two, aiming to increase the attention of users without being more intrusive than current posts. You have been provided with EXTRA MATERIAL for this section so that you can better appreciate each configuration of TEXT and IMAGE.

Looking at these four options (see Appendix 7) please tick ONE circle with the configuration that you would recommend the brand to use on the main column of your social networking site? Look at the text and image carefully. Spend as much time as needed.

Participants then viewed four configurations of images that were the same across the conditions. Variations were in size of both text and image and participants were asked to choose the one they would recommend the brand to use in their own personal wall. Once participants recommended their configuration they were asked to assess their intentions to engage with the brand and brand content using the four dependent variables outlined in Chapter 2 (i.e. Page Liking, Content Liking, Content Sharing and Content Commenting).

Descriptive statistics of the data set were computed to provide an overview of its composition. The average age was 28.25 (SD= 5.11) and 43.8% of the sample population was female. The kurtosis level for each of the conditions and dependent variables showed high levels of kurtosis for "Like" (-0.813), "Like Page" (-0.702) and "Share" (0.949) variables in the Controlled condition. All four dependent variables in the Low Brand Immediacy condition (LI) presented abnormally high levels of kurtosis: "Like Page" (-1.639), "Like" (-1.164), "Comment" (-1.565) and "Share" (-1.659). Finally, the High Brand Immediacy condition (HI) also presented high levels of kurtosis in three of the four dependent variables: "Like Page" (-1.780), "Like" (-1.384) and "Comment" (-1.621). Thus, a normality test was conducted, as recommended by Seltman (Seltman, 2012), using the Shapiro–Wilk test, as this is more adequate for small samples ($n < 50$). Only three dependent variables in the high physical immediacy condition did not pass the test that requires significant values greater than 0.05 (Field, Miles, & Field, 2012), suggesting that data for the following variables is not normally distributed: page liking, content commenting and content sharing (Results are highlighted in Table 32 below). However, this might be due to the small sample size from which the pilot study was collected and should not discourage proceeding to the analysis of variance test, as larger studies with ANOVA are robust enough, even when the normality assumption is not met (Stevens, 2007).

Table 32- Pilot Study 1 normality test

Condition	Dependent Variable	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Control	Page Liking	.916	11	.285
	Content Liking	.948	11	.622
	Content Commenting	.899	11	.181
	Content Sharing	.882	11	.110
Low Physical Immediacy	Page Liking	.865	10	.087
	Content Liking	.943	10	.591
	Content Commenting	.848	10	.055
	Content Sharing	.862	10	.080
High Physical Immediacy	Page Liking	.792	11	.007
	Content Liking	.903	11	.201
	Content Commenting	.785	11	.006
	Content Sharing	.778	11	.005

Manipulation check and corrective measures

Participants were asked to rank from 1 to 5 (1 being very physically distant and 5 being very physically close) the perceived physical proximity (immediacy) of the Facebook fan page they were presented with. The manipulation check indicated that the sample was not perceiving differences in physical immediacies for the three conditions ($M_{\text{High}} = 2.27$; $M_{\text{Low}} = 1.90$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 2.18$; $p = 0.74$). Due to the failure in manipulation, no further results regarding hypotheses testing are presented for this study. In order to address this issue, two focus group with 6 participants with similar demographics to the sample (undergraduate and postgraduate students of management courses) was organised.

During the focus groups, the motivations behind engagement with Facebook fan pages was discussed, as well as the different elements as suggested in social impact theory. Part of the discussion was aimed at identifying what elements people notice first in the Facebook fan page, and if the focus on the physical location of the Fan page. Some of the explanations that were discussed during these focus groups was that in the design of the experiment, consumers were asked to focus in a task that distracted them from the attention of the indicating elements for physical immediacy. In addition, images were generic and with little reference to the physical location. In order to overcome these limitations identified in the pilot test, some

changes were introduced. The first one was to make the initial task focus the attention to the element representing low/high immediacy. This was achieved by asking participants to rank the elements in the post that they paid the most attention to. By doing this they have to read and rank the physical location of the page, the nature (organic vs. sponsored) or the time the post was published, making them aware of the elements that were being manipulated. In addition, the picture also related closely to the type of immediacy being manipulated.

There were also comments in terms of the scales being used, as the ones that were measuring the intentions ranged from 1 to 7, while the ones measuring Facebook intensity use and the manipulation check were from 1 to 5. The scales were all standardised to a 7 point scale as psychometric literature suggests that larger scale points would allow users sufficient points of discrimination for the questions they were posed (Nunnally, 1994).

The changes were tested with a group of 30 postgraduate students and the manipulation checks this time confirmed that the sample perceived differences in the low ($M_{Low} = 3.5$; $SD = 0.84$) high ($M_{High} = 5.2$; $SD = 0.63$) and control ($M_{Control} = 2.5$; $SD = 1.17$; $F(2, 27) = 22.26$, $p < 0.01$) conditions.

6.4 Main studies

6.4.1 Introduction

The next three sections present the results from the three main studies. The experimental procedures for these were outlined in Section 6.4 in this thesis. The studies test the effects of physical, social and temporal immediacy on four engagement behaviours: Page liking, content liking, content commenting and content sharing.

6.4.2 Data collection

Data was collected over a 10-week period between December 2013 and February 2014, using a paper-based survey (see Appendix 1). The researcher explained the structure of the survey and allowed participants to fill it in for a period of 15 minutes. A pre-test of the same survey reported an average completion time of 10 minutes and 41 seconds among a population as similar to the target sample. Surveys were collected back after the 15 minute period and data was manually inputted into SPSS.

Table 33 outlines the categories of information that were collected in the survey, ranging from socio-demographic information to the measurement of intentions to engage with the content from a Facebook fan page. These intentions to engage comprise the following behaviours: (1) to like content, (2) to comment on content, (3) to share content and (4) to like a fan page. These behaviours are the most common forms of interaction allowed on Facebook and are frequently use as engagement proxies in both academic and practitioners' studies (Ellison et al., 2007; eMarketer, 2013c; Sashittal, Sriramachandramurthy, & Hodis, 2012; Smock et al., 2011). In addition to these variables, the participant's involvement with the categories and Facebook usage were also measured as covariates.

Table 33- Overview of data collected

Information	Variables
Socio-demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (Nominal) • Gender (Nominal) • First language (Nominal) • Facebook user (Nominal)
Engagement behaviour with Facebook Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liking content (Intention – Scale) • Commenting content (Intention – Scale) • Sharing content (Intention – Scale) • Liking Page (Intention – Scale)
Category Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement (Scale)
Facebook Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of friends (Scale) • Hours spent on Facebook (Scale) • Attitudes towards Facebook as a platform (Scale)
Manipulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High/Low/Control

6.4.3 Sample characteristics

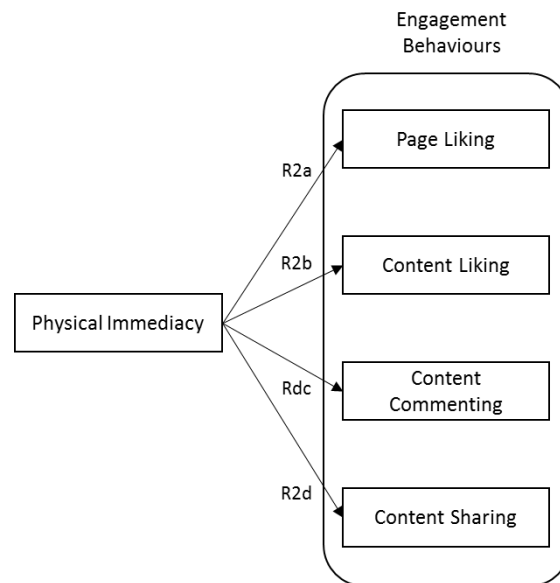
This section covers sample characteristics for all three studies. A total of 300 first year students took part in this study. Participants' mean age was 19, with a minimum age of 17 and a maximum of 50 years old. It was decided that, for ethical reasons, participants under the age of 18 would not be taken into consideration for analysis. This is because consent from an adult is needed, according to the Ethics Committee at Heriot-Watt University. For this reason, six participants who were under 18 years old were removed from the sample. Further analyses only take into account the 294 remaining participants. In terms of gender, 52.3% of the sample were female participants, 45.7% male and 0.7% preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of language, 81.9% of participants were native English speakers. Tests to determine if first language could be influencing the dependent variables are reported in Appendix 9.

6.5 Study 1: Measuring the effect of physical immediacy

6.5.1 Procedures

A one factor with independent measures experimental design is applied to test the model outlined in Figure 35. Following the steps outlined in Section 6.4, a group of first year students were given the survey found in Appendix 1 of one of the three conditions of the study (i.e. high physical immediacy, low physical immediacy and control condition).

Figure 35- Physical immediacy and engagement behaviours



In total 81 students were invited to take part in the study. From them, 2 opted out from taking part in it, and an additional one was of age 17 and was therefore removed, in accordance with the ethical consideration discussed in Section 6.4.4, thus leaving 78 participants in total, with a mean age of 18.7 (SD=1.40). 51.3% of the participants in this study were females. The first language of 85.9% of the participants was English. Tests are conducted in the following sections to determine if gender and first language of the participants affected the results. The data met the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of 69 participants for each study (23 per condition), allowing a statistical power of 0.80 in this study.

Table 34- Sample characteristics (study 1 - physical immediacy)

Study	Type of immediacy	Frequency	Percent
Physical immediacy	High immediacy - physical immediacy	30	38.5
	Low immediacy - physical immediacy	23	29.5
	Control	25	32.1
	Total	78	100

6.5.2 Manipulation checks

Before starting with the hypothesis testing process, the sample was subject to a series of preliminary procedures to ensure the internal validity of the experiment. A manipulation check was conducted to determine if high and low conditions were perceived as physically (geographically) distinct. The results show that they were indeed perceived as the manipulation intended on a scale that ranges from 1 (distant) to 7 (close) ($M_{\text{High}} = 5.46$; $M_{\text{Low}} = 2.47$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.88$; $n=78$; $F(2,75)=31.56$; $p<0.01$).

The data were also analysed for the presence of outliers, normality of distribution and homogeneity of variance, in order to meet the assumptions needed for ANOVA testing. The results of these analyses can be found in Appendix 4. The following section reports the results of the one way ANOVA that was conducted to test the hypotheses regarding the effect of physical immediacy on four engagement behaviours.

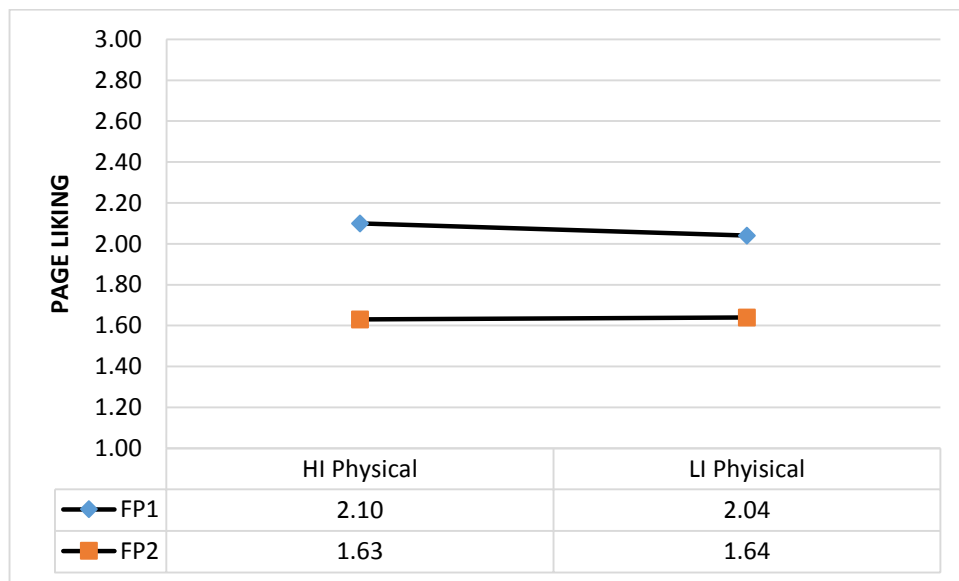
6.6 Statistical testing: Study 1

6.6.1 Physical immediacy and Page Liking

R2a: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.

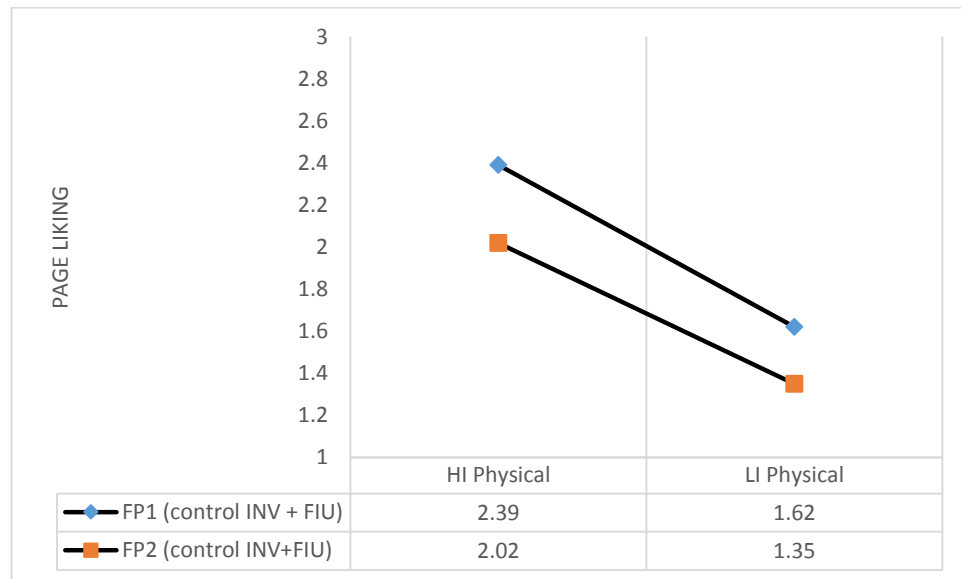
A reliability test was conducted for the measurements of Page Liking behaviour. Both analyses, Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = 0.78$) and a Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), were at a satisfactory level to continue with the ANOVA test. The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) in Page Liking behaviour did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M = 2.10$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M = 2.04$, $F(2,75) = 0.01$, $p = 0.99$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for Liking a Fan Page. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M = 1.63$) and the LI condition ($M = 1.64$, $F(2,73) = 0.00$, $p = 0.99$).

Figure 36- Physical immediacy and page liking



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between physical immediacy and intended page liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage. The results show that there is a significant effect on physical immediacy and the intention to like the page 1 ($F=5.183$, $p<0.05$) and to like page 2 ($F=4.542$, $p<0.05$) when controlling for Facebook Intensity usage.

Figure 37- Physical immediacy and page liking (ANCOVA)



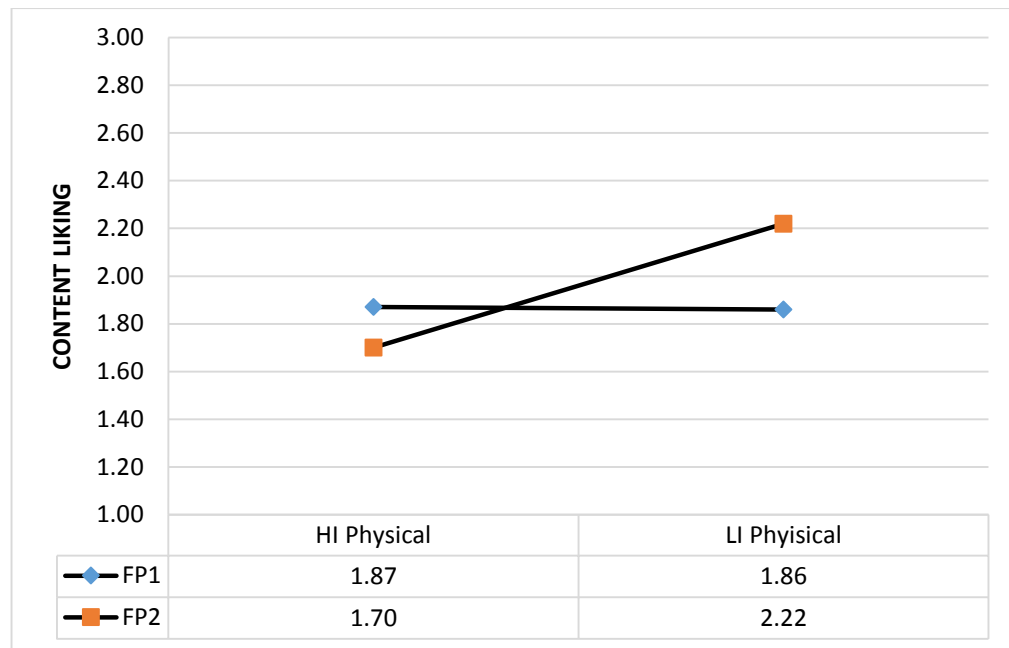
6.6.2 Physical immediacy and content liking

R2b: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.

A reliability test was conducted for the measurements of Content Liking behaviour. Both analyses, Cronbach alpha ($\alpha= 0.76$) and a Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.61$, $p<0.01$), were at a satisfactory level to continue with the ANOVA test. The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) in Liking a post did not show any statistically significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=1.87$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.86$,

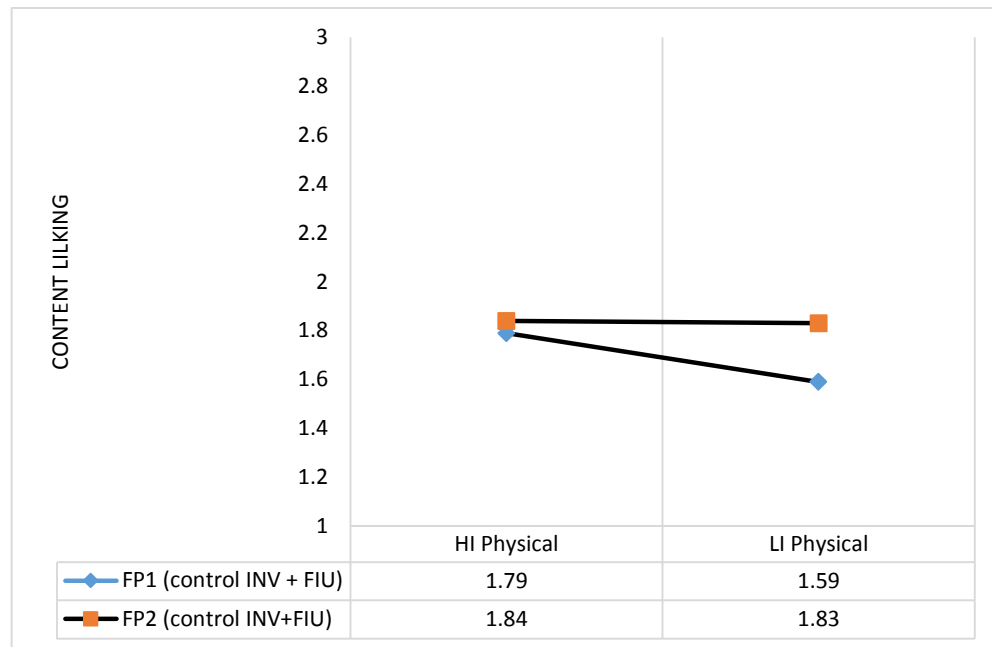
$F(2, 74) = 1.29, p = 0.28$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for Liking a post. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M = 1.70$) and the LI condition ($M = 2.22, F(2, 75) = 0.94, p = 0.39$).

Figure 38- Physical immediacy and content liking



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between physical immediacy and intended content liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage. The results show that there is a significant effect on physical immediacy and the intention to like content on page 1 ($F = 5.50, p < 0.05$) and no significant effect to like content of page 2 ($F = 3.148, p = 0.87$) when controlling for product involvement.

Figure 39- Physical immediacy and content liking (ANCOVA)

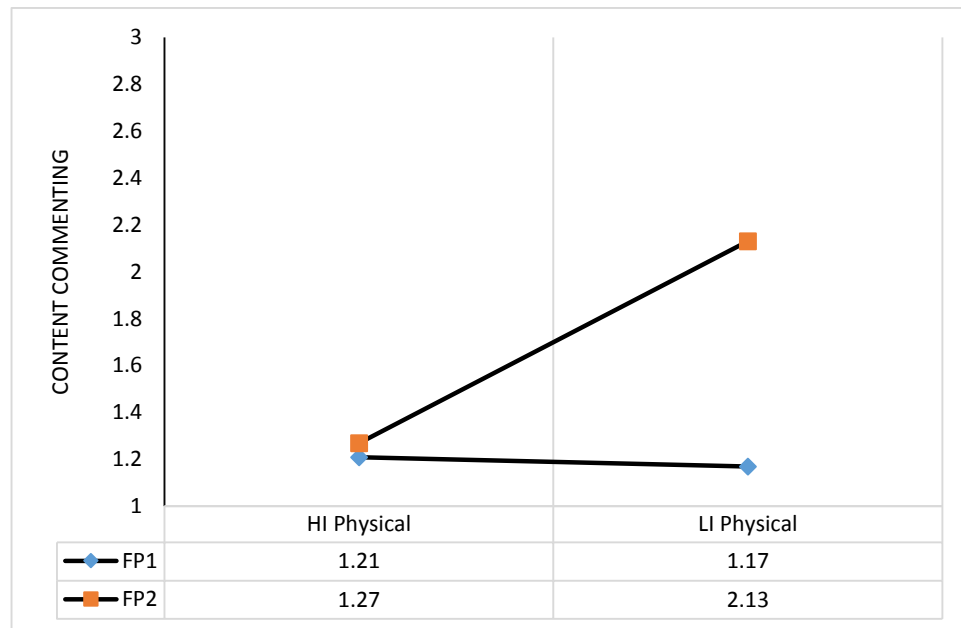


6.6.3 Physical immediacy and commenting on fan page content

R2c: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

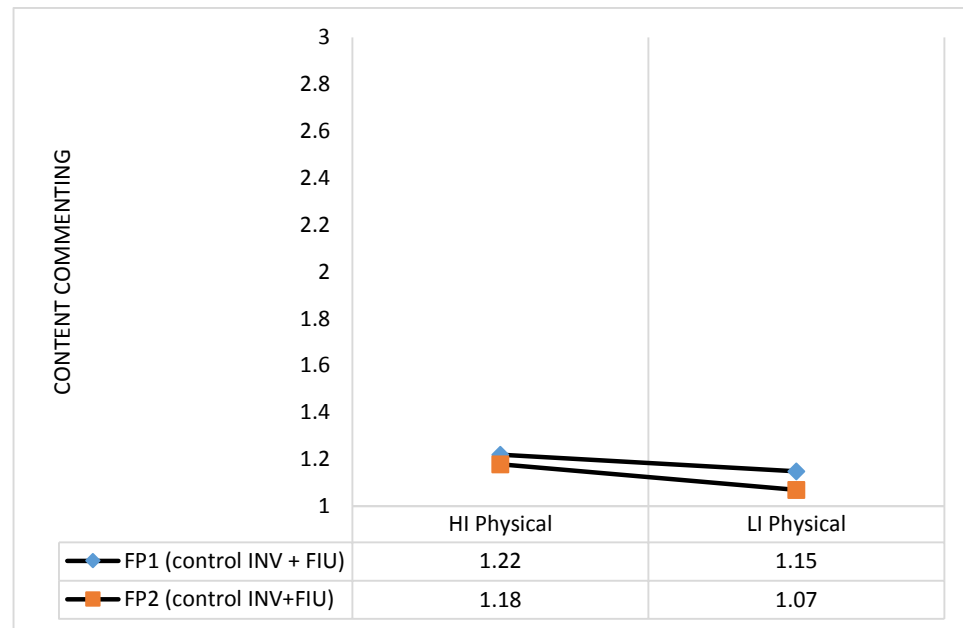
Preceding the ANOVA test on Page liking intentions, a reliability test was conducted on the measurements of Page liking intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for both Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.68$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.53$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) in Commenting on a post did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=1.21$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.17$, $F(2, 73) = 0.64$, $p=0.53$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for commenting on a post. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=1.27$) and the LI condition ($M=2.13$, $F(2, 74) = 0.89$, $p=0.42$).

Figure 40- Physical immediacy and content commenting



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between physical immediacy and intended content commenting behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage. The results show that there is no significant effect on physical immediacy and the intention to comment content on page 1 ($F=0.013$, $p=0.91$) and no significant effect to comment content of page 2 ($F=0.406$, $p=0.53$) when controlling for FIU and similar results when controlling for product involvement.

Figure 41- Physical immediacy and content commenting (ANCOVA)

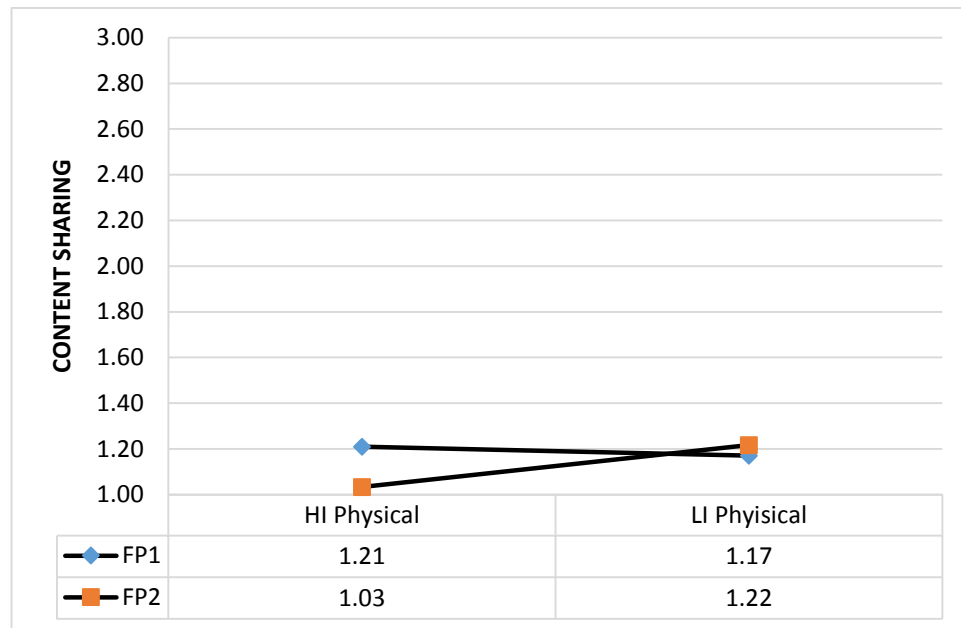


6.6.4 Physical immediacy and sharing fan page content

R2d: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions.

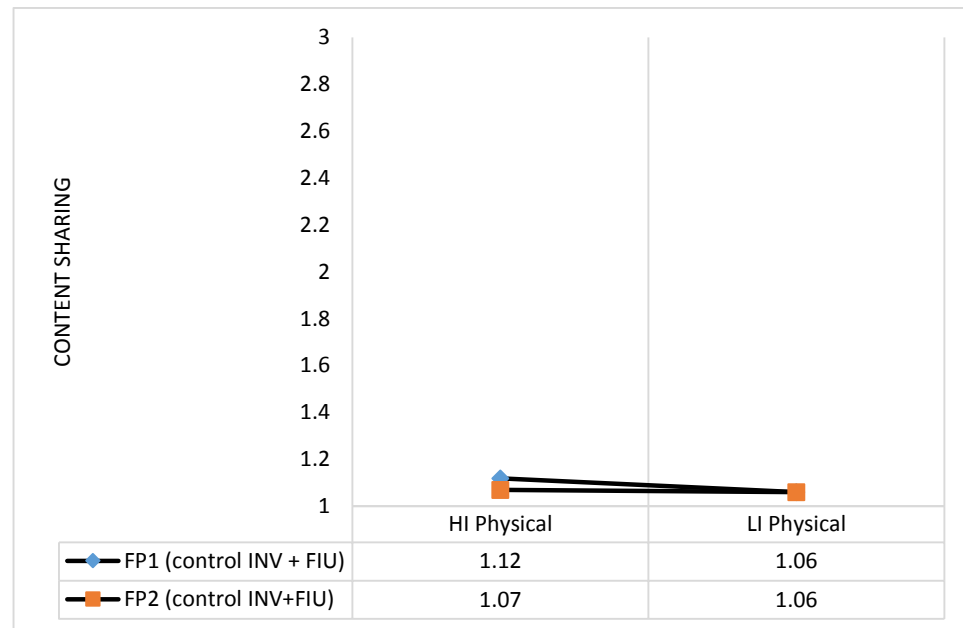
Before applying the ANOVA test to content commenting intentions, a reliability test was conducted on the measurements of content commenting intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.85$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.76$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) in Sharing a post did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=1.21$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.17$, $F(2, 73)=0.13$, $p=0.88$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for sharing a post. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=1.03$) and the LI condition ($M=1.22$, $F(2, 73)=1.54$, $p=0.22$). Both results suggest the rejection of R2d. Due to the lack of significant results, no contrast analysis or analyses for confounding effects were conducted for this behaviour.

Figure 42- Physical immediacy and content sharing



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between physical immediacy and intended content sharing behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is a weak significant effect on physical immediacy and the intention to share content on page 1 ($F=4.135$, $p=0.052$) and no significant effect to share content of page 2 ($F=2.914$, $p=0.09$) when controlling for product involvement.

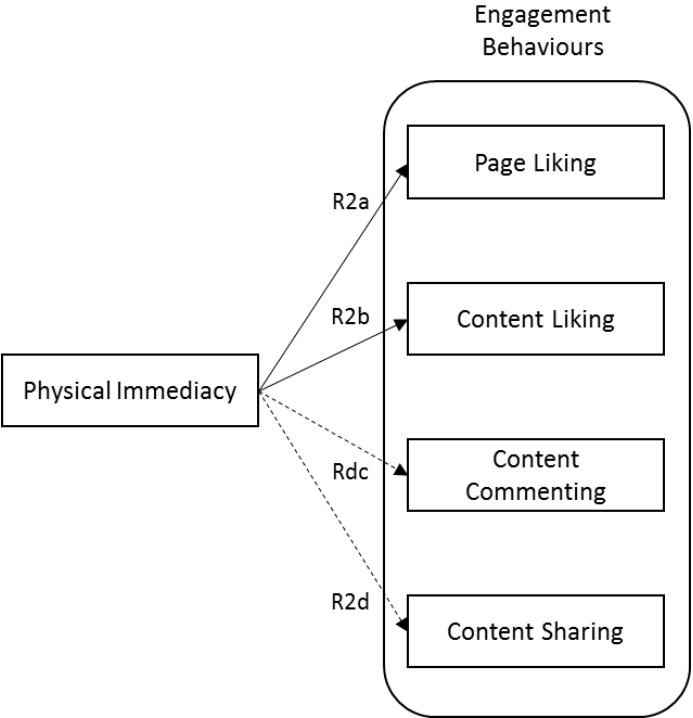
Figure 43- Physical immediacy and content sharing (ANCOVA)



6.6.5 Study 1: conclusion

This section aimed to measure the relationship that exists between physical immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours with a brand on Facebook. The evidence from this study suggests that physical immediacy has a significant effect on the engagement behaviours being measured for page liking, content liking behaviour, but only when moderated by the degree of product involvement and intensity usage of the platform. Previous studies conducted online have found that physical immediacy affects the interactions between two individuals. However, the results point towards there being no relationship between this factor and the intention to comment and share content.

Table 35- Statistical testing result summary

		Research propositions	Outcome from testing
 <p>The diagram illustrates the relationship between Physical Immediacy and Engagement Behaviours. Physical Immediacy is shown in a box on the left. Engagement Behaviours are grouped in a rounded rectangle on the right, containing four sub-behaviours: Page Liking, Content Liking, Content Commenting, and Content Sharing. Arrows point from Physical Immediacy to each of these sub-behaviours, labeled R2a, R2b, R2c, and R2d respectively. The arrows to Page Liking and Content Liking are solid, while the arrows to Content Commenting and Content Sharing are dashed.</p>		R2a: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.	Accepted when controlling for FIU
		R2b: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.	Accepted when controlling for product involvement
		R2c: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.	Rejected
		R2d: Physical immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions	Rejected

Alternative explanations to these results could come from an experiment design perspective and a discussion of these explanations will be developed in the next chapter.

6.7 Study 2: Measuring the effect of social immediacy

Building on the results from Study 1, a different form of immediacy is measured in Study 2. Social immediacy is identified as an alternative type of immediacy, affecting social impact (Naylor et al., 2012; Pedersen et al., 2008; Bourgeois & Bowen, 2001). Social immediacy has been found to increase positivity (e.g. in-groups are perceived as more positive than out-groups) (Lieberman, 2007). It is proposed that brands that present low immediacy Facebook pages to a target would be less likely to generate behaviours such as liking, sharing, commenting on and participation with that particular brand. Thus the following propositions are formulated:

R3a: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.

R3b: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.

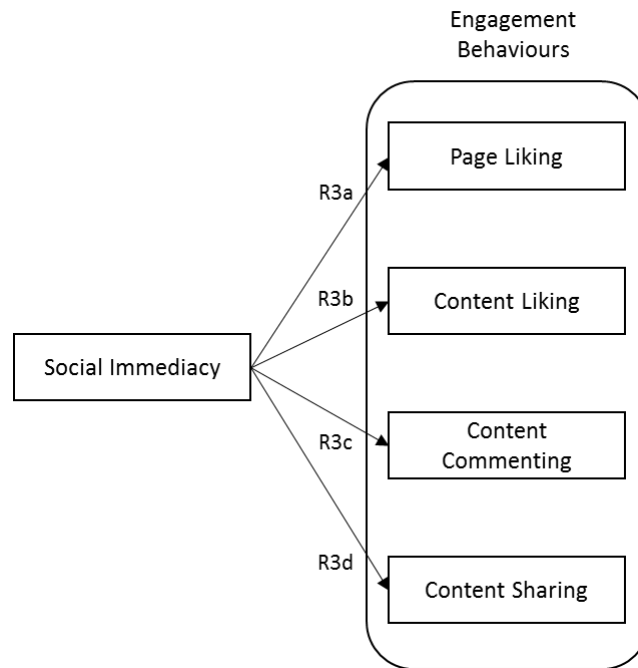
R3c: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

R3d: Social immediacy can have a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions

6.7.1 Procedures

A one factor with independent measures experimental design is applied to test the model outlined in Figure 44. Following the steps outlined in Section 6.4, a group of first year students were given the survey found in Appendix 2 of one of the three conditions of the study (i.e. high social immediacy, low social immediacy and a control condition).

Figure 44- Social immediacy and engagement behaviours



In total 132 students were invited to take part in the study. From these, 5 opted out from taking part, and an additional two were aged 17 and were therefore removed, in accordance to the ethical consideration discussed in Section 6.4.4, thus leaving 125 participants in total, with a mean age of 22.27 (SD=4.73). In terms of gender, 52% of the participants in this study were females. The first language of 72.4% of the participants was English. Tests are conducted in the following sections to determine if gender and first language of the participants affected the results. The data met the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of 69 for each study (23 per condition), allowing a statistical power of 0.80 in this study.

Table 36- Sample characteristics (study 2 - social immediacy)

<i>Study</i>	<i>Type of immediacy</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Social immediacy</i>	High immediacy - social immediacy	46	36.8
	Low immediacy - social immediacy	29	23.2
	Control	50	40
	Total	125	100

6.7.2 Manipulation checks

Before starting with the hypothesis testing process, the sample was subject to a series of preliminary procedures to ensure the internal validity of the experiment. A manipulation check was conducted to determine whether high and low conditions were perceived as socially distant. The results show that people perceived the high immediacy condition to be socially closer than the low immediacy condition and the control one ($M_{\text{High}} = 5.21$; $M_{\text{Low}} = 3.23$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 4.02$; $n=126$; $F(2,123)=17.57$; $p<0.01$).

The data also was analysed for the presence of outliers, normality of distribution and homogeneity of variance, in order to meet the assumptions needed for ANOVA testing. The results of these analyses can be found in Appendix 5. The following section reports the results of the one way ANOVA that was conducted to test the hypotheses that test the effect of physical immediacy on four engagement behaviours.

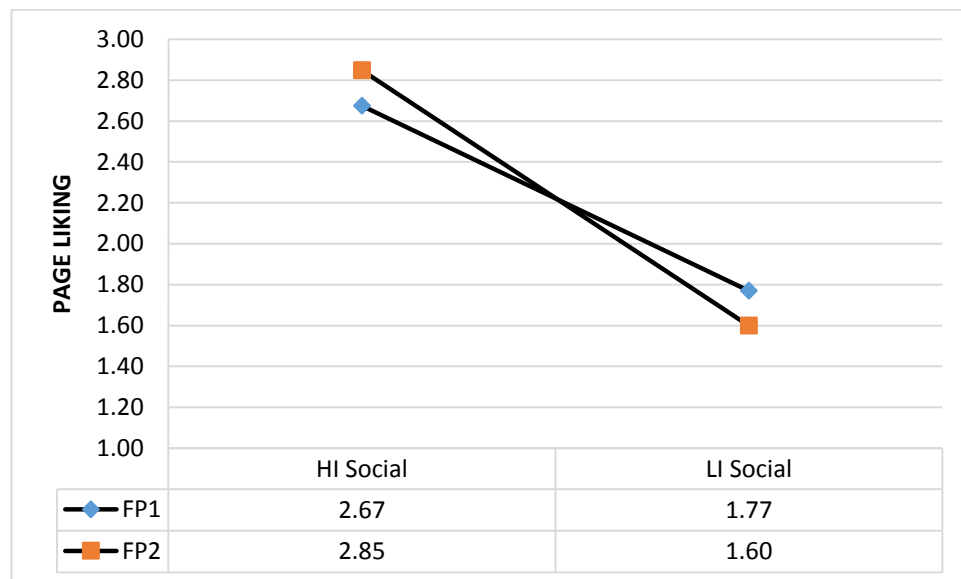
6.8 Statistical testing: Study 2

6.8.1 Social immediacy and page liking

R3a: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook Page liking intentions.

Prior to the ANOVA test on Page liking intentions, a reliability test was conducted on the measurements of Page liking intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.794$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.66$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) on Facebook Page Liking show a significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.67$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.77$, $F(1, 74)=5.33$, $p<0.05$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2). There was significant difference between the HI condition ($M=2.85$) and the LI condition ($M=1.60$, $F(1, 74)=9.72$, $p<0.01$).

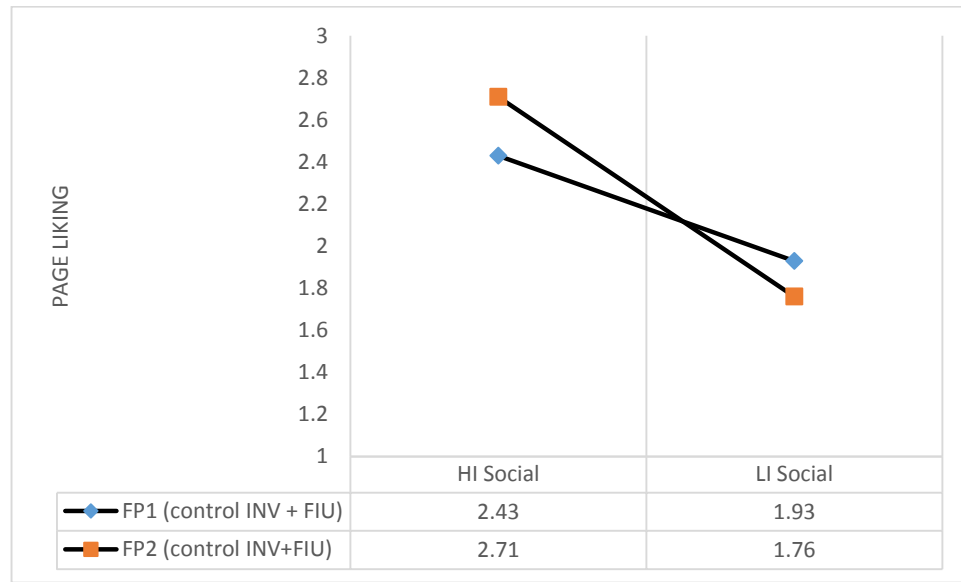
Figure 45- Social immediacy and page liking



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between social immediacy and intended page liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is

a significant effect on social immediacy and the intention to like page 1 ($F=12.11$, $p<0.01$) and a significant effect to like page 2 ($F=11.54$, $p<0.01$) when controlling for product involvement.

Figure 46- Social immediacy and page liking (ANCOVA)

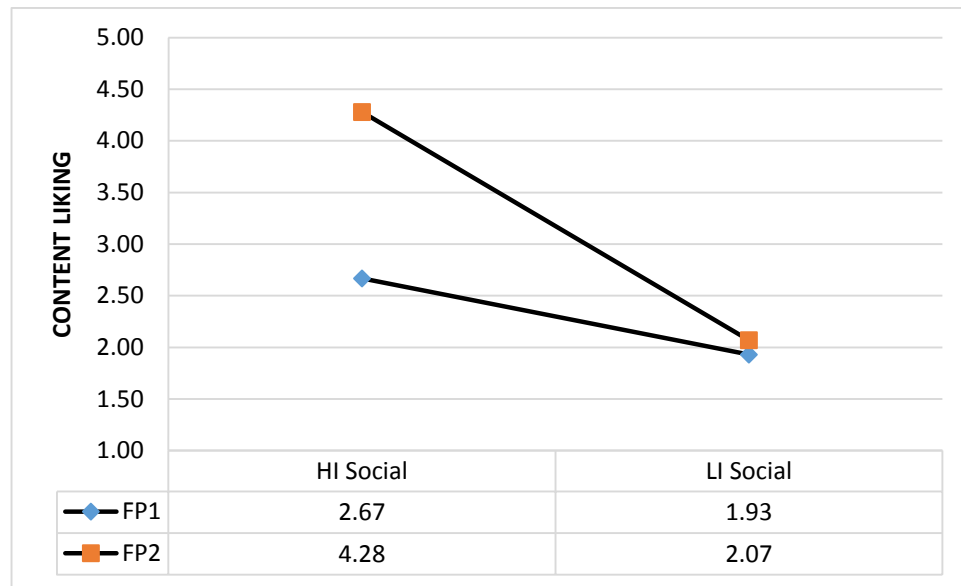


6.8.2 Social immediacy and liking content

R3b: Social immediacy has a positive effect on liking content

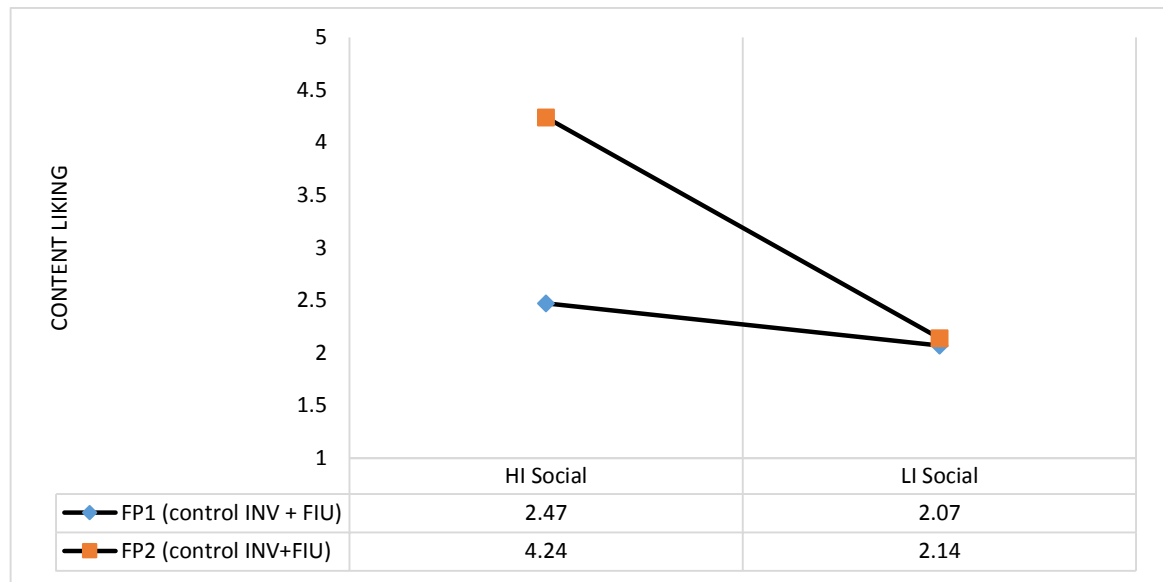
Reliability tests were conducted to the measurements of content liking intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.67$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.55$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) on Facebook Page Liking show a significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.67$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.93$, $F(1, 74) = 3.79$, $p<0.05$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2(FP2). There was significant difference between the HI condition ($M=4.28$) and the LI condition ($M=2.07$, $F(1, 74) = 30.37$, $p<0.01$).

Figure 47- Social Immediacy and liking content



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between social immediacy and intended content liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is a significant effect on social immediacy and the intention to like content in page 1 ($F=9.57$, $p<0.01$) and a significant effect to like page 2 ($F=7.74$, $p<0.01$) when controlling for product involvement.

Figure 48- Social Immediacy and liking content (ANCOVA)

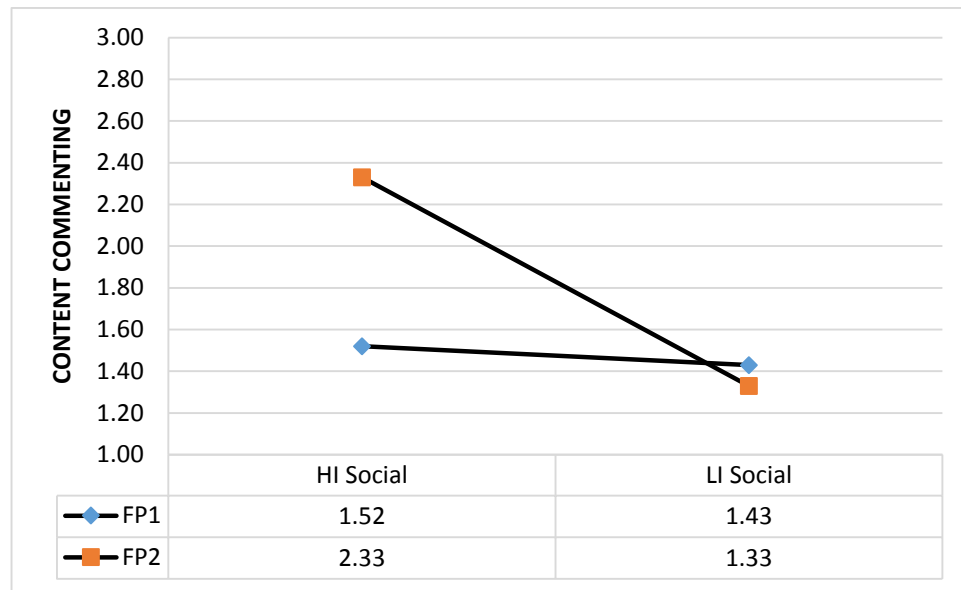


6.8.3 Social immediacy and commenting on a post

R3c: Social immediacy has a positive effect on commenting on content

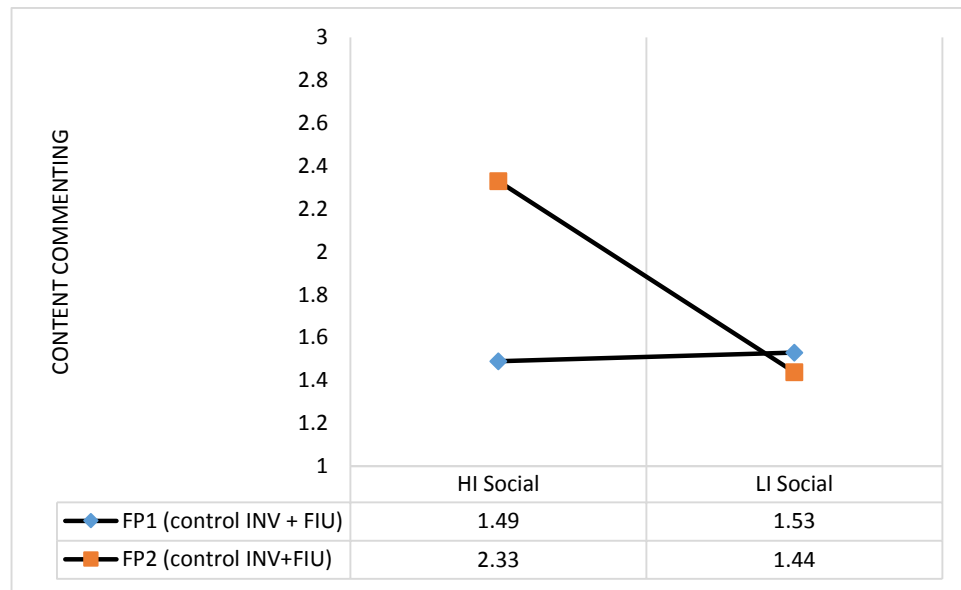
Before applying the ANOVA test to content commenting intentions, a reliability test was applied to the measurements of content commenting intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.66$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.57$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) on Facebook Page Liking show no significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=1.52$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.43$, $F(1, 74)=0.116$, $p=0.73$). However, the results obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) show a significant difference between the HI condition ($M=2.33$) and the LI condition ($M=1.33$, $F(1, 74)=9.68$, $p<0.01$).

Figure 49- Social immediacy and commenting on content



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between social immediacy and intended content commenting behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is a significant effect on social immediacy and the intention to like comment in page 1 ($F=4.256$, $p<0.05$) and no significant effect to comment page 2 ($F=2.926$, $p=0.092$) when controlling for product involvement.

Figure 50- Social immediacy and commenting on content (ANCOVA)

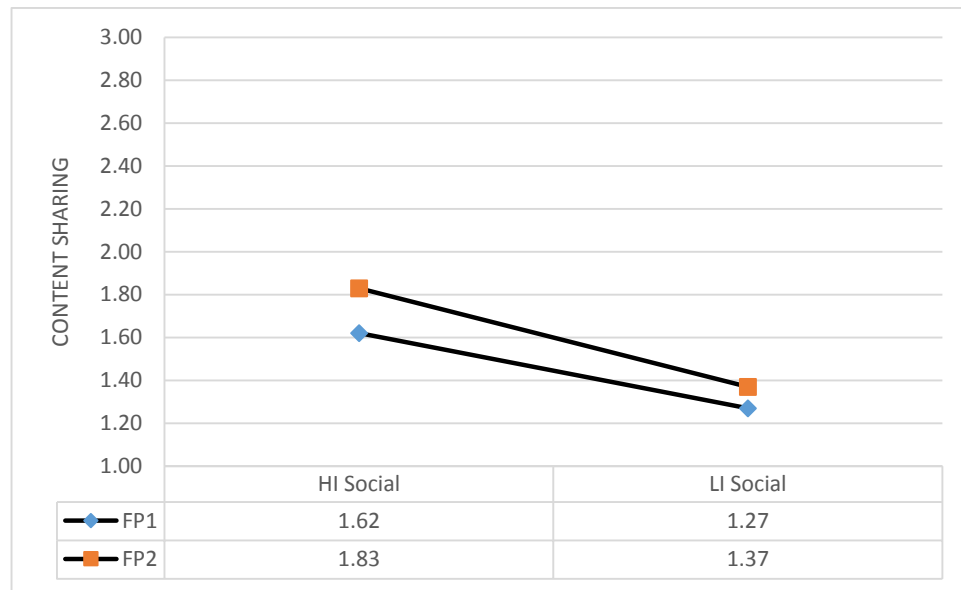


6.8.4 Social immediacy and sharing

R3d: Social immediacy has a positive effect on sharing content.

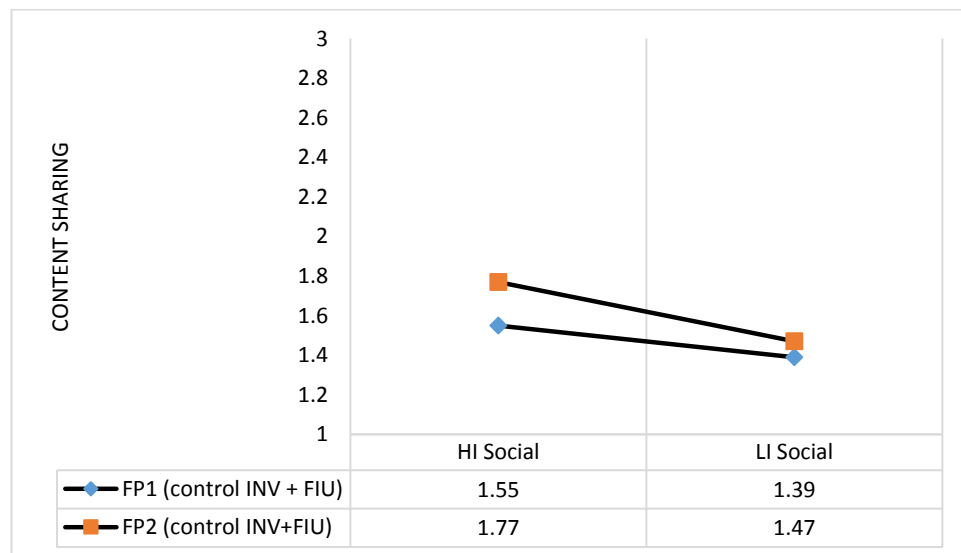
The results of the reliability tests were satisfactory for both Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.73$) and the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.58$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) on Facebook Page Liking did not show statistically significant differences between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=1.62$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.27$, $F(1, 73) = 1.722$, $p=0.193$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2), showing no significant difference between the HI condition ($M=1.83$) and the LI condition ($M=1.37$, $F(1, 74) = 2.123$, $p=0.149$).

Figure 51- Social immediacy and sharing content



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between social immediacy and intended content sharing behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is a significant effect on social immediacy and the intention to like share in page 1 ($F=6.736$, $p<0.05$) and no significant effect to share page 2 ($F=2.83$, $p=0.097$) when controlling for product involvement.

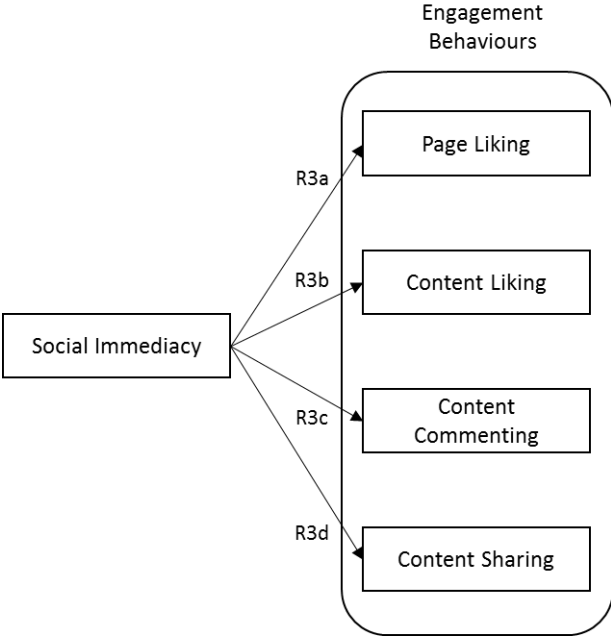
Figure 52- Social immediacy and sharing content (ANCOVA)



6.8.5 Study 2: conclusion

Based on the results of this study, social immediacy was found to have a positive effect on all of the intended engagement behaviours being measured. In particular, for all but one (Commenting on a post) high social immediacy had a positive effect with respect to Fan Page 2. Fan page 2 was characterised by use of a message and image that was not directly speaking about the product, whereas Fan Page 1 was displaying a product-centred post. The results suggest that messages about brands that are not product centred are more likely to generate higher levels of engagement. On the other hand, messages from brands that were product centred can be positively affected even when the message is coming from a high immediacy source with a moderating effect from product involvement.

Table 37- Statistical testing result summary

	Research propositions	Outcome from testing
 <p>The diagram illustrates the relationship between Social Immediacy and various engagement behaviors. A box labeled 'Social Immediacy' has four arrows pointing to a larger rounded rectangle labeled 'Engagement Behaviours'. Inside this rectangle are four smaller boxes: 'Page Liking', 'Content Liking', 'Content Commenting', and 'Content Sharing'. The arrows are labeled R3a, R3b, R3c, and R3d respectively.</p>	R3a: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.	Accepted when controlling for product involvement
	R3b: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.	Accepted when controlling for product involvement
	R3c: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.	Accepted when controlling for product involvement
	R3d: Social immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions	Accepted when controlling for product involvement

This focus on content that is less product-centred, as brands are “invading” a space that was originally for consumers only, is not new. Fournier and Avery (Fournier & Avery, 2011) have already argued that in this space, the content that elicits more engagement is the one that generates more value for the participating community, rather than the one that only speaks about marketing and advertising a certain product. This is also in line with one of the main differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 philosophies, where traditional forms of advertising are being substituted by participation and organic word-of-mouth generation (Murugesan, 2007). The implications of these results are fully developed in the next chapter.

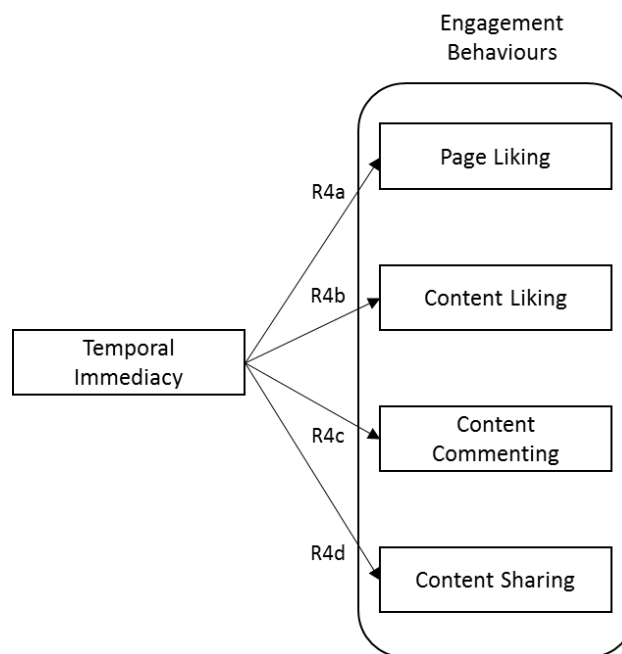
6.9 Study 3: Measuring the effects of temporal immediacy

Temporal immediacy is another of the forms of immediacy initially suggested in social impact theory. (Latané, 1981). It suggests that as the source of influence is temporally closer (in the past or the future) to the target, it will positively influence the target. Consequently, the research hypotheses for this study are formulated with the expectation of finding higher levels of intention to perform each of the behaviours when the fan page is in the high immediacy condition.

6.9.1 Procedures

A one factor with independent measures experimental design is applied to test the model outlined in Figure 53. Following the steps outlined in Section 6.4, a group of first year students were given the survey found in Appendix 3 of one of the three conditions of the study (i.e. high temporal immediacy, low temporal immediacy and a control condition).

Figure 53- Temporal immediacy and intended consumer engagement behaviour



In total 92 students were invited to take part in the study. From these, 1 was removed because the participant did not give consent to participate in the study, thus leaving 91 participants in total, with a mean age of 19.69 (SD=1.89). In terms of gender, 57.1% of the participants in this study were females. The first language of 82.4% of the participants was English. Tests to determine if first language of the participants affected the results are reported in Appendix 9. The data met the requirements set out in Chapter 5 of 69 for each study (23 per condition), allowing a statistical power of 0.80 in this study.

Table 38- Sample characteristics (study 3 - temporal immediacy)

<i>Study</i>	<i>Type of immediacy</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Temporal immediacy</i>	High immediacy - temporal immediacy	38	41.8
	Low immediacy - temporal immediacy	25	27.5
	Control	28	30.8
	Total	91	100

6.9.2 Manipulation checks

Before starting with the hypothesis testing process, the sample was subject to a series of preliminary procedures to ensure the internal validity of the experiment. A manipulation check was conducted to determine if high and low conditions were perceived as socially distant. The results show that people perceived the high immediacy condition to be temporally closer than the low immediacy condition and the control one ($M_{\text{High}} = 4.74$; $M_{\text{Low}} = 3.16$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.85$; $n=91$; $F(2,88)=9.25$; $p<0.01$).

The data also was analysed for the presence of outliers, normality of distribution and homogeneity of variance, in order to meet the assumptions needed for ANOVA testing. The results of these analyses can be found in Appendix 6. The following section reports the results of the one way ANOVA that was conducted to test the hypotheses that test the effect of physical immediacy on four engagement behaviours.

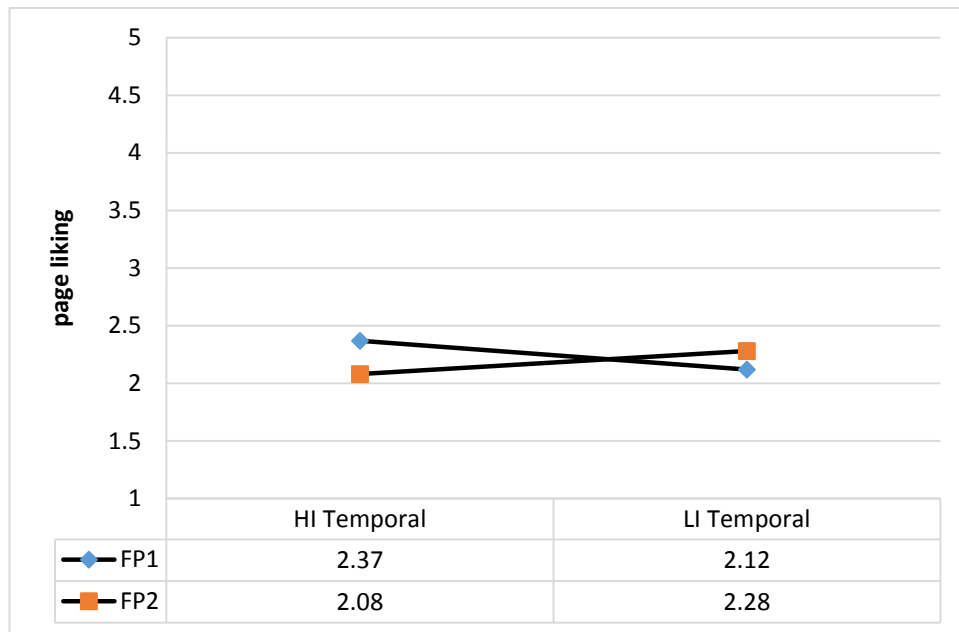
6.10 Statistical testing: Study 3

6.10.1 Temporal immediacy and liking a Facebook Page

R4a: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook Page liking intentions

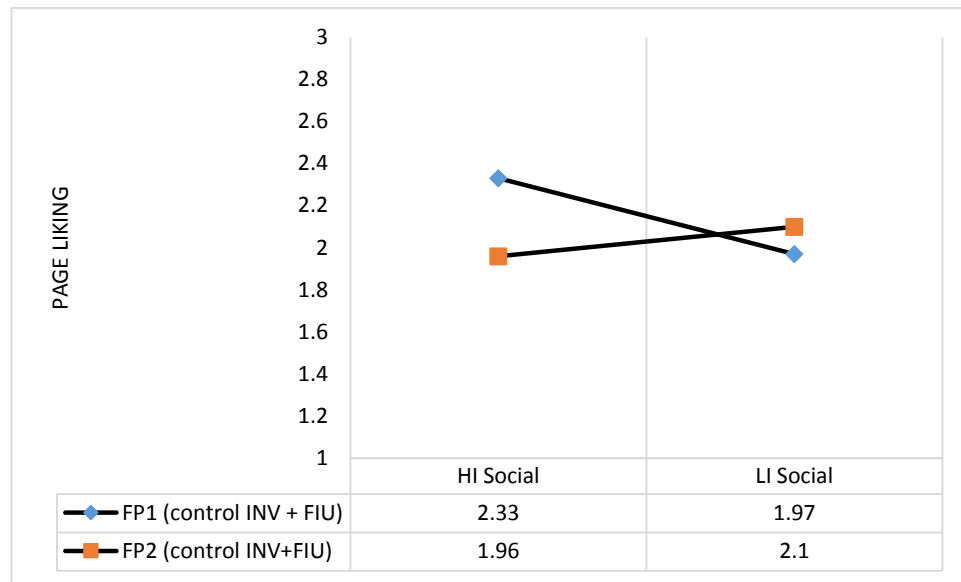
Prior to the ANOVA test on Page liking intentions, a reliability test was applied to the measurements of Page liking intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.76$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.61$, $p<0.01$). The results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) with the variable Intention to Like a Facebook Page did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.37$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=2.12$, $F(2,87)=0.32$, $p=0.72$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for the same variable. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=2.34$) and the LI condition ($M=2.20$, $F(2,88)=0.83$, $p=.43$). Due to the results for the main effects, no further analyses were conducted on this behaviour.

Figure 54- Temporal Immediacy and Page liking



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between temporal immediacy and intended page liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is no significant effect on temporal immediacy and the intention to like page 1 ($F=2.894$, $p=0.09$) and no significant effect to like page 2 ($F=1.884$, $p=0.17$) when controlling for product involvement. Similar effects were found when controlling for FIU.

Figure 55- Temporal Immediacy and Page liking (ANCOVA)

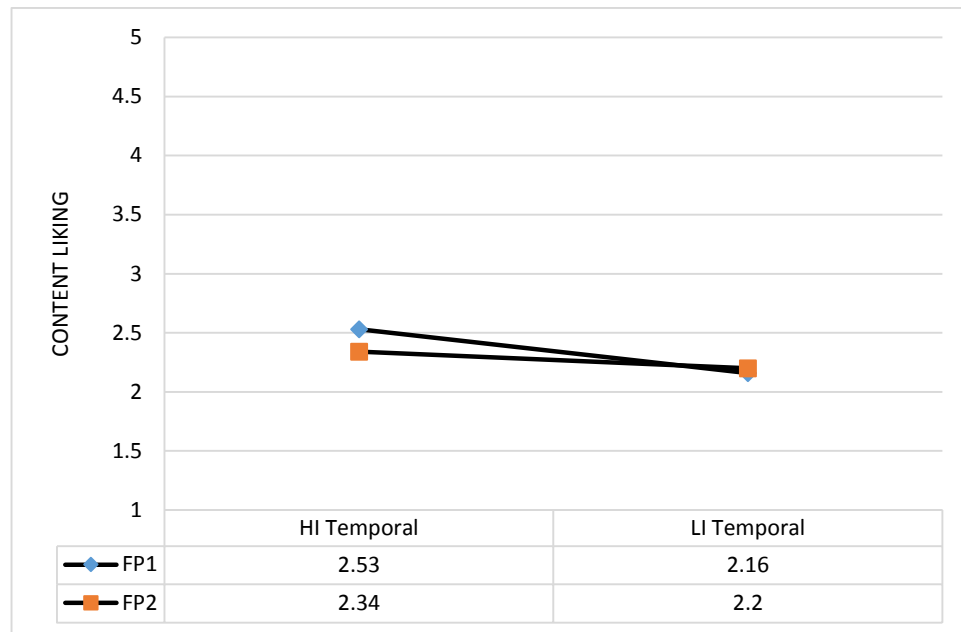


6.10.2 Temporal immediacy and liking content on Facebook

R4b: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on content liking

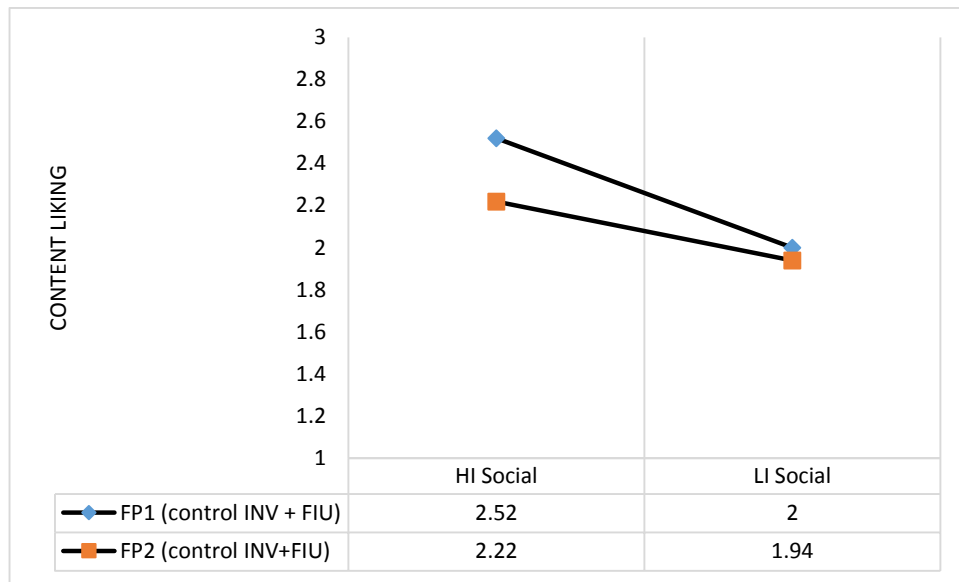
Reliability tests were conducted on the measurements of content liking intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.64$) and a positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.47$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) with the variable Intention to Like a post did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.53$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=2.16$, $F(2,87)=0.60$, $p=0.55$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2(FP2) for the same variable. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=2.34$) and the LI condition ($M=2.20$, $F(2, 88) =.15$, $p=.85$). Due to the results for the main effects, no further analyses were conducted on this behaviour.

Figure 56- Temporal immediacy and content liking



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between temporal immediacy and intended page liking behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is no significant effect on temporal immediacy and the intention to like content in page 1 ($F=0.134$, $p=0.72$) and no significant effect to like content in page 2 ($F=0.126$, $p=0.72$) when controlling for product involvement. Similar effects were found when controlling for FIU.

Figure 57- Temporal immediacy and content liking (ANCOVA)

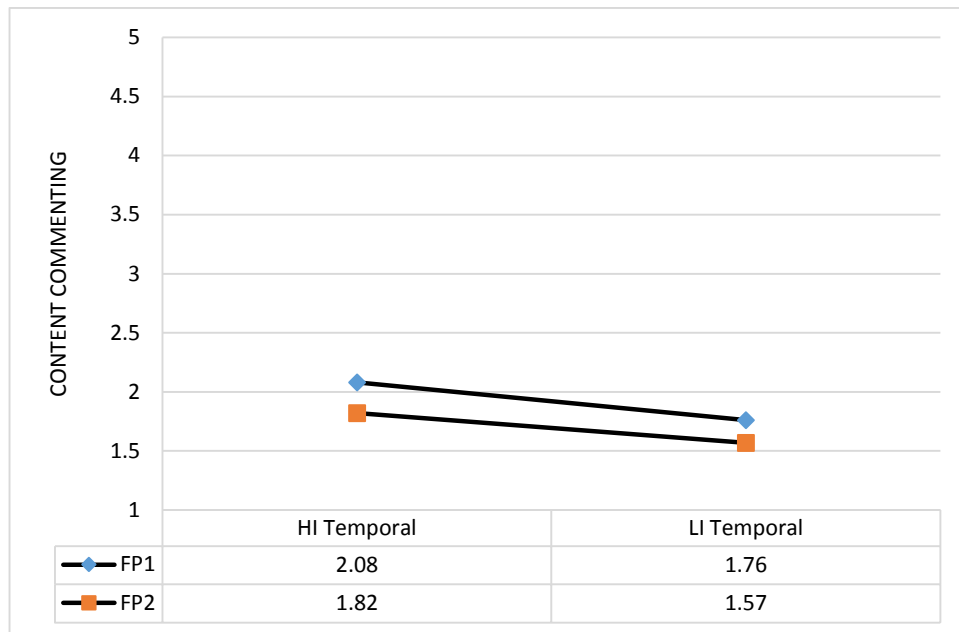


6.10.3 Temporal immediacy and commenting on content on Facebook

R4c: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.

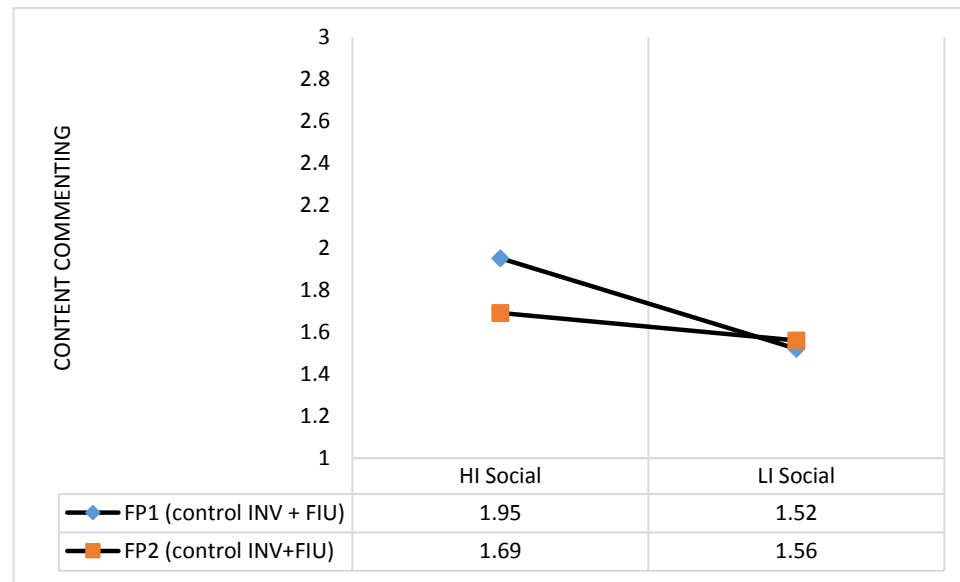
Before applying the ANOVA test to content commenting intentions, a reliability test was applied to the measurements of content commenting intentions, obtaining satisfactory results for Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.82$) and a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.70$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) with the variable Intention to comment on a post did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.08$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.76$, $F(2, 87)=0.60$, $p=0.55$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for the same variable. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=1.82$) and the LI condition ($M=1.57$, $F(2, 85)=.89$, $p=.41$). Due to the results for main effects, no further analyses were conducted on this behaviour.

Figure 58- Temporal immediacy and content commenting



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between temporal immediacy and intended page commenting behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is no significant effect on temporal immediacy and the intention to comment content in page 1 ($F=0.142$, $p=0.70$) and no significant effect to comment content in page 2 ($F=0.715$, $p=0.40$) when controlling for product involvement. Similar effects were found when controlling for FIU.

Figure 59- Temporal immediacy and content commenting (ANCOVA)

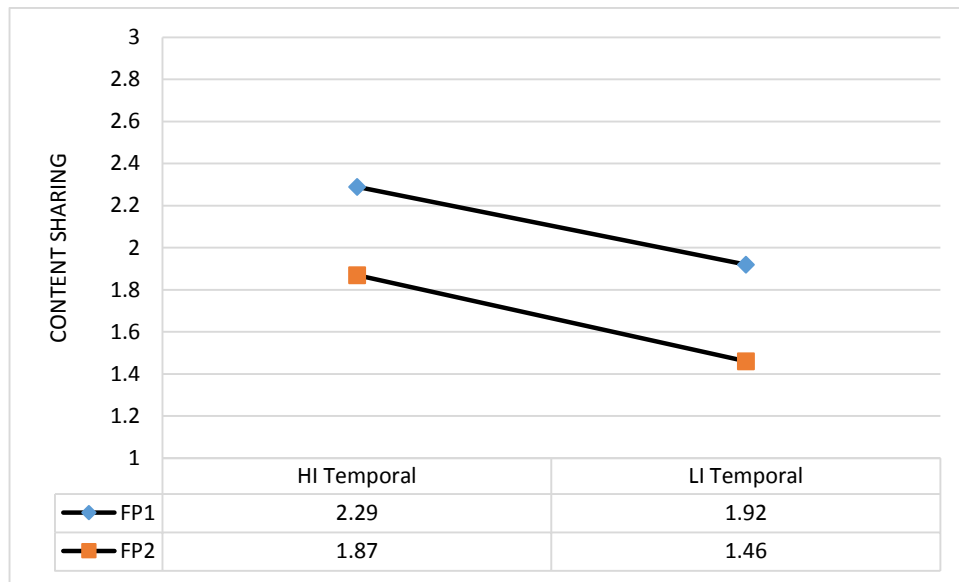


6.10.4 Temporal immediacy and sharing content on Facebook

R4d: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on content sharing intentions.

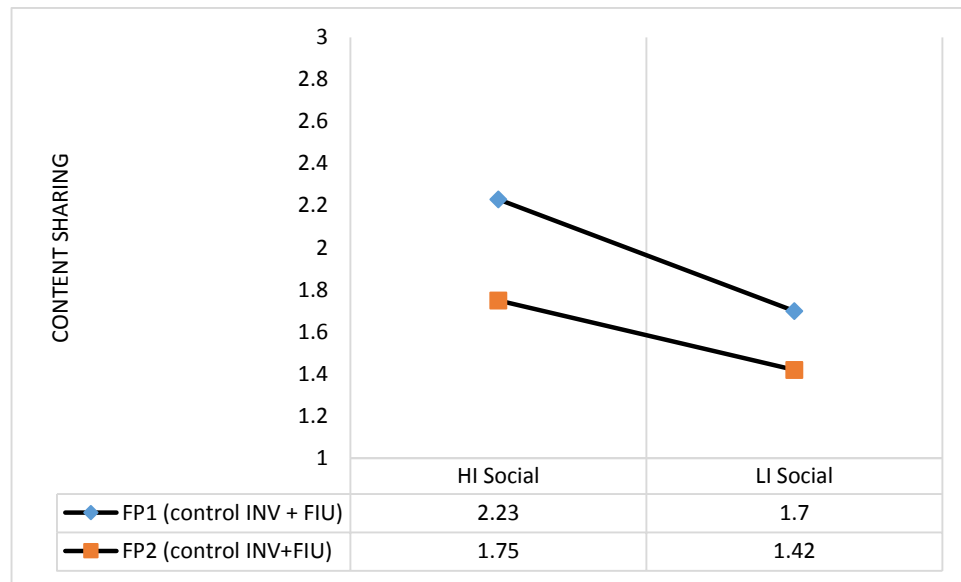
The results of the reliability tests were satisfactory for both Cronbach alpha ($\alpha=0.69$) and the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r= 0.57$, $p<0.01$). The ANOVA results for Fan Page 1 (FP1) with the variable Intention to share a post did not show any significant difference between the high immediacy condition (HI, $M=2.29$) and the low immediacy condition (LI, $M=1.92$, $F(2, 87) = 0.78$, $p=0.46$). Similar results were obtained with the measurement of Fan Page 2 (FP2) for the same variable. No significant difference was found between the HI condition ($M=1.87$) and the LI condition ($M=1.46$, $F(2, 86) = 0.99$, $p= 0.37$).

Figure 60- Temporal immediacy and content sharing



An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between temporal immediacy and intended page sharing behaviour when controlling for product involvement and Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU). The results show that there is no significant effect on temporal immediacy and the intention to share content in page 1 ($F=0.002$, $p=0.96$) and no significant effect to share content in page 2 ($F=2.154$, $p=0.14$) when controlling for product involvement. Similar effects were found when controlling for FIU.

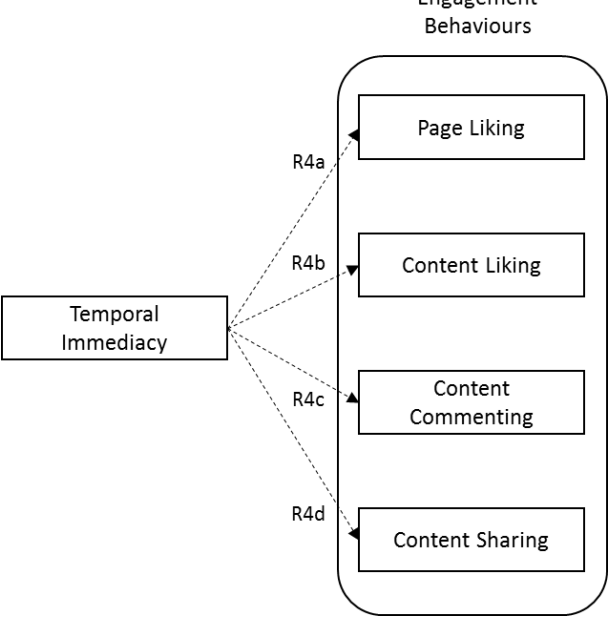
Figure 61- Temporal immediacy and content sharing (ANCOVA)



6.10.5 Study 3: conclusion

This section aimed to test the relationship that exists between temporal immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours on social media websites. In particular it tested the effect of low/high temporal immediacy on engagement behaviour between consumers and a Facebook fan page. The results resemble those for physical immediacy, where no significant effect was found between the two conditions.

Table 39- Statistical testing result summary

	Research propositions	Outcome from testing
 <p>The diagram illustrates the relationship between Temporal Immediacy and various engagement behaviors. A box labeled 'Temporal Immediacy' is connected by dashed arrows to four boxes within a larger rounded rectangle labeled 'Engagement Behaviours'. The four behaviors are: Page Liking, Content Liking, Content Commenting, and Content Sharing. The arrows are labeled R4a, R4b, R4c, and R4d respectively.</p>	R4a: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook page liking intentions.	Rejected
	R4b: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content liking intentions.	Rejected
	R4c: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content commenting intentions.	Rejected
	R4d: Temporal immediacy has a positive effect on Facebook content sharing intentions	Rejected

Social media websites are characterised by allowing both synchronous and asynchronous communication (Kietzmann et al., 2011). To the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first study that provides empirical evidence that these variations have no effect of on the social influence that those messages convey, at least in the context of consumer interactions on a Brand Fan Page. The implications of these results are to be contrasted with other studies conducted in electronic word-of-mouth in the form of online reviews, that found that the time that a review was posted is determinant of their influence in the form of trustworthiness and value (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Bone, 1995). A discussion of the implications of these findings can be found in the next chapter.

6.11 Immediacy and gender

One of the research objectives in this research is to investigate other factors that might moderate the effects of immediacy on engagement behaviours. This was done based on the review of the literature that identified product involvement and intensity usage of the platform as potential moderators. Within the literature of social influence, gender has been also identified as a potential factor that can affect the level of influence of a source over a target (Venkatesh & Morris, 2000). For this reason the variable Gender was tested using a One-Way ANOVA on the three studies.

The results for physical immediacy showed no significant effect between the dependent variable and all intended engagement behaviours. In contrast to the previous results, gender differences were found in the study that measured social immediacy as immediacy. All dependent variables were significantly higher when respondents were females.

The effects of gender were measured as independent variable in the temporal immediacy study, female participants had significantly higher intentions to perform some of the behaviours being measured. Intention to *Like Post* for Fan Page 1 was significantly higher with Female participants ($M=2.76$) than with Male ones ($M=1.87$, $F(1, 88) = 11.80$, $p < 0.00$). Dependent variable *Share* in Fan Page 1 also had the same gender effect, with female participants scoring significantly higher intentions to share the content ($M=2.39$) than male ones ($M=1.59$, $F(1, 88) = 7.16$, $p < 0.01$). For intention to like the fan page, similar differences were found in both measurements. Females scored higher intentions to Like Fan Page 1 ($M=2.61$) and Like Page 2 ($M=2.65$) than male participants (Like Page 1 $M=1.92$, $F(1, 88) = 10.58$, $p < 0.00$; Like Fan Page 2 $M=1.82$, $F(1, 88) = 7.34$, $p < 0.01$). The implications of these results are discussed in the following section. The implications of these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

Table 40- Gender and intended engagement behaviours

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	Std Dev	F	Sig
Physical Distance	Fan Page 1	<i>Like Post</i>	Female	2.22	1.60	.28	.60
			Male	2.03	1.65		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	1.21	0.52	.32	.57
			Male	1.30	0.78		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	1.10	0.37	.42	.52
			Male	1.16	0.50		
	Fan Page 2	<i>Like Page</i>	Female	2.29	1.55	.46	.50
			Male	2.05	1.52		
		<i>Like Post</i>	Female	2.12	1.70	.51	.48
			Male	1.86	1.42		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	1.21	0.52	.54	.46
			Male	1.14	0.35		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	1.10	0.38	.01	.93
			Male	1.11	0.39		
Social Distance	Fan Page 1	<i>Like Post</i>	Female	2.95	1.87	11.80	0.00
			Male	1.94	1.42		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	1.56	1.15	3.02	0.08
			Male	1.27	0.63		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	1.70	1.32	7.16	0.01
			Male	1.20	0.65		
		<i>Like Page</i>	Female	2.86	1.91	10.58	0.00
			Male	1.89	1.42		
	Fan Page 2	<i>Like Post</i>	Female	3.91	2.07	7.63	0.01
			Male	2.92	1.96		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	2.05	1.42	5.20	0.02
			Male	1.53	1.08		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	1.83	1.45	3.64	0.06
			Male	1.40	0.97		
		<i>Like Page</i>	Female	2.77	1.97	7.34	0.01
			Male	1.92	1.53		
Temporal Distance	Fan Page 1	<i>Like Post</i>	Female	2.76	1.99	11.80	.00
			Male	1.87	1.26		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	2.00	1.55	3.02	.08
			Male	1.74	1.19		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	2.39	1.86	7.16	.01
			Male	1.59	1.09		
		<i>Like Page</i>	Female	2.61	1.73	10.58	.00
			Male	1.92	1.31		
	Fan Page 2	<i>Like Post</i>	Female	2.54	1.87	7.63	.01
			Male	2.08	1.49		
		<i>Comment on Post</i>	Female	1.66	1.02	5.20	.02
			Male	1.63	1.10		
		<i>Share Post</i>	Female	1.70	1.20	3.64	.06
			Male	1.64	1.16		
		<i>Like Page</i>	Female	2.65	1.87	7.34	.01
			Male	1.82	1.14		

6.12 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of a series of focus groups and three studies that explored and measured different forms of immediacy on a series of consumer engagement behaviours. The results from these studies are summarised in Table 41. Some of the initial implications of these results were briefly introduced in the conclusion section of each of the relationships being investigated. The findings contribute to research conducted using social impact theory as an initial framework because it is the first of its kind to test more than one form of immediacy within the same online context. In addition, the findings challenge some of the expected outcomes that SIT would predict based on a number of offline studies. In particular, it appeared that temporal immediacies did not have the same effect as when applied offline in the context of Facebook fan pages.

Table 41- Results from experiments measuring the effect of immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours

Immediacy	Engagement Behaviour			
	Page liking	Content liking	Content commenting	Content sharing
Physical	Accepted	Accepted	Rejected	Rejected
Social	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Temporal	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected

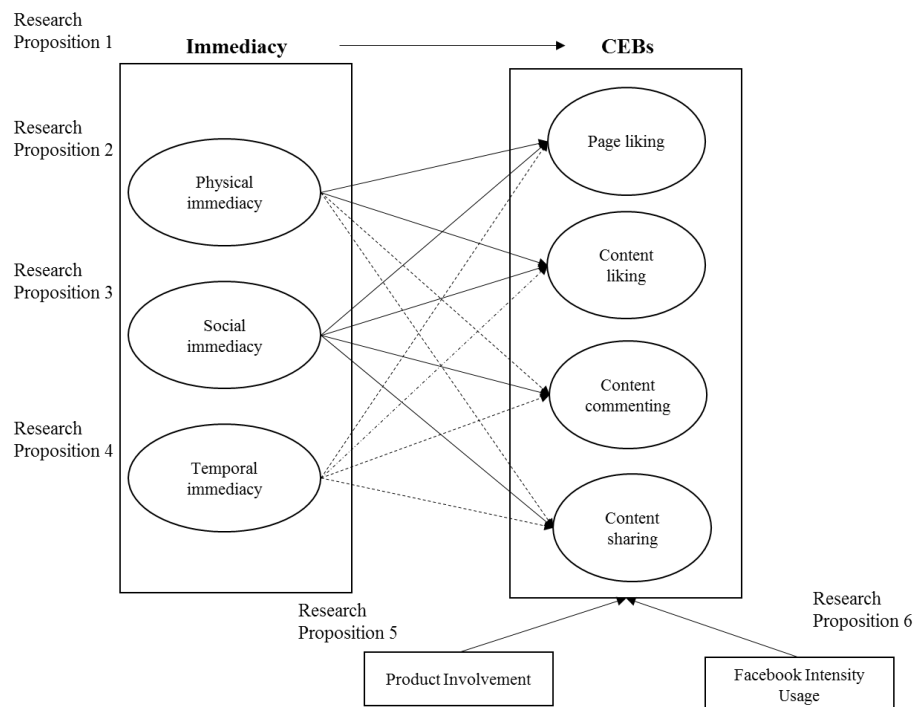
An argument developed in previous chapters to measure SIT in this context was that the nature of social media websites and the interactions that can occur there are different to the offline world, in that physical and temporal immediacies do not follow the same principles as in offline interactions. It appears that the rejection of the research proposition based on the data collected for temporal distance supports the idea that social impact theory does not apply in the same way in all contexts. This idea will be further developed in the Discussion chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter links the research findings with the current literature in order to explain the results and highlight the contribution of this research in the wider literature. Drawing upon the theory-derived model on the effects of immediacy on engagement behaviours (Figure 62), this chapter discusses how these findings support immediacy as a factor of social impact in online environments. This research also provides evidence of the moderating effect of product involvement and Facebook intensity usage to certain engagement behaviours. The findings also support social impact theory as an appropriate theory to explain how behaviour changes as a result of changes in immediacy.

Figure 62- Social influence model on engagement behaviours



The discussion will be organised based on the objectives that were outlined to fulfil the aim of this thesis rather than on a study by study basis.

Section 1: Immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours

7.2 The effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in Facebook fan pages

It was shown in Chapter 2, when reviewing the literature on social influence, that immediacy can affect behaviour in online environments. Some evidence suggests that physical immediacy affects behavioural outcomes. The results obtained in this thesis support SIT's conceptualisation of immediacy as a determinant of social impact. Two forms of immediacy (i.e. physical and social immediacy) were found to have a significant effect on the intentions to perform the behaviours being measured in the thesis. A summary of the results can be found in Table 42, which shows that, from the three types of immediacies being measured, physical immediacy has a significant effect in page liking and content liking behaviour, whereas social immediacy had a significant effect on all the intended behaviours being measured. These results show that not all forms of immediacy affect intended engagement behaviours in online environments at the same level, as temporal immediacy did not change at a significant level the intentions to perform these intended behaviours.

Table 42- Results from experiments measuring the effect of immediacy on intended consumer engagement behaviours

Engagement Behaviour				
Immediacy	Page Liking	Content Liking	Content Commenting	Content Sharing
Physical	Accepted	Accepted	Rejected	Rejected
Social	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Temporal	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected

These findings add to the emerging body of literature that has been conducted on how immediacy can affect consumer-brand interactions in online environments. Immediacy is already considered as an important element to promote the building of a relationship between a brand and consumers in online environments (McWilliam, 2000). It allows consumers to replicate several elements present in face-to-face interactions and which enhance the whole interactive experience. Findings in the online context also suggest that perceived low physical immediacy may affect collaboration and persuasion (Bradner & Mark, 2002). However, the results of this research, with a focus on a different behavioural outcome, CEBs, increase our understanding of the nature of immediacy in online environments. Three forms of immediacy were measured in this research, and there was an expectation based on previous studies that physical (Bradner and Mark, 2002) social and temporal immediacy (Zhao & Xie, 2011) would all have a similar effect on the engagement behaviours being measured. However, the findings contradict the idea that all forms of immediacies have similar effects in the social media context and provide support for the prominence of physical and social immediacy as a determinant of influence in online environments under certain circumstances. The evidence provided by this thesis also suggest the importance of product involvement and intensity usage of the particular platform as moderators of the effects that the types of immediacies measured can have. The following subsections discuss the implications for each of the forms of immediacy tested in the research studies.

7.2.1 Physical immediacy in online environments

This section expands on the implications of the results obtained from the empirical studies by testing the effects of physical immediacy in a series of consumer engagement behaviours, and looks at providing an explanation for them. The effect of physical immediacy, one of the three forms of immediacy posited by social impact theory as determinants of influence, was measured empirically in a series of experiments. Evidence from offline and online studies show that the more physically immediate a source of influence is from a target, the more influence this source will yield (J. D. Baker, 2004; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982). Following this principle, it was proposed that behavioural intentions between consumers and Fan Pages would be positively affected by the perceived physical immediacy of the fan page. The findings in this research support these findings.

Physical immediacy is present in two-way interactions offline and online. Whenever a source and a target interact, there exists a distance relationship based on their geographical location. In a face-to-face conversation, the immediacy between them does not exceed a few metres; however, online environments are not constrained by the physical immediacy of their users, as they can engage in interpersonal interactions regardless of where they are physically located (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). Online environments are not the first means of communication that allow for interactions to occur regardless of the physical immediacy (e.g. mail, telegraph, radio and telephone are other means of communication that are not constrained by physical immediacy). The study of physical immediacy in these kinds of environments is of interest in many fields within the social sciences, including marketing.

The relationships between physical immediacy in online environments and interactions have been studied from the organisational behaviour perspective in terms of how they affect group formation and collaboration (Bradner & Mark, 2002; Kraut, Egidio, & Galegher, 1988). This topic has also been studied in order to assess the effectiveness of teaching through computer-mediated communication and how it affects participation, learning and interaction between

students and facilitators (Alavi et al., 1997; Webster & Hackley, 1997). In the field of social psychology, interest has focused on how interaction occurring in an online environment affects the social impact of the sources on a target (Kwahk & Ge, 2012; M. D. Miller & Brunner, 2008). In social psychology, SIT looks at how physical immediacy affects cognitive, emotional and behavioural outcomes. The study of the effect of physical immediacy on human interaction increasing, and this research contributes to the body of knowledge in this field by providing empirical evidence of how physical immediacy in online environments affects intended behaviour.

Within marketing, empirical findings point to a relationship between physical immediacy and consumer behaviour outcomes. Blum and Goldfarb (Blum & Goldfarb, 2006) have found that the physical immediacy of a website affects demand only in certain contexts. They distinguish between two types of products: taste-dependent (e.g. music, games, food, drinks) and non-taste dependent products (e.g. software, financial information). Their evidence suggests that in the context of product consumption, physical immediacy will affect taste-dependent products at a higher level. The authors argue that this is due to the fact that physical immediacy captures taste similarities as well, and therefore countries located closer to each other tend to have more similar taste or are more able to cater to each other's consumer taste (Blum and Goldfarb, 2006). The results obtained in this study suggest a similar relationship. Results from the focus groups in this thesis suggest that content in Facebook fan pages is subject to similar effects. For example, it was identified that taste in content was also perceived to be different based on the location. Fan pages that can grasp relevant content and nuances of a geographically delimited audiences can lead to more engagement behaviours towards that content. This effects appear to be also existent when people build ties with a certain geographic region and then move to another. As some of the participants in the focus group pointed out, some felt identified with certain regions either because they lived there or because they have certain level of affinity to it. In the context of Facebook fan pages, the experience of not being able to participate in a certain promotion can generate disappointment, yet participants seem to make the distinction between functional values (possibilities to enter into a promotional activities) against experiential value (interacting with the page because it is fun). Similar effects are seem in other social

media settings such as blogs, where experiential value is one of the main drivers behind the generation and interaction with content (Ching-Jui Keng, 2009).

In terms of the specific engagement behaviours being measured in this experiment, only two behaviours (page liking and liking content) were significantly affected by physical immediacy, while content commenting and content sharing appear to be not affected by this type of immediacy, but rather by other forms of immediacies or other drivers not related to social influence. Within social sciences, there is a perspective that on the Internet, social interactions are driven by personal goals and needs (Spears & Lea, 1992). Blumler and Katz (Blumler & Katz, 1974) “Uses and Gratifications” theory suggest that within mass media channels, interaction with/in that particular media are only determined by the goals and needs of the users themselves. This view has also been extended into online environments, where process and content gratifications as well as social gratification have been found in several studies as motivators to interact in this medium (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). In particular, within the target group from which these experiments were conducted, there is some evidence that indicates that managing a positive identity and persona in a social context is the main driver for use of these type of platforms (Harridge- March, Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010). Another plausible explanation can come from the findings of the focus group. Several participants acknowledge that page liking and liking behaviours as being one of the “easiest” or even “automatic” behaviour in this context. The associate cost of liking a page or page content is relatively minimum, whereas commenting and sharing information require a higher degree on effort and can have a positive impact of the person sharing or commenting on a post. More investigation is needed in this respect to determine if other groups that are not driven by the building of self-identity, as in the case of social networking sites, behave in a similar manner.

The findings in the physical immediacy study conclude that, at its most basic level (i.e. when a brand is unknown by the user and there are no other drivers underpinning the interaction), physical immediacy can affect engagement behaviours in consumer-brand interactions on Facebook such as page liking and liking behaviour. However, higher level of engagement in

the form of content commenting and sharing need to take into account more complex mechanisms that motivate this type of interaction. For example, sharing content encompasses opportunities and risks associated with reputation building if the content is valuable or damage if the content is unreliable (Chang & Chuang, 2011). Therefore, it could be possible that sharing content within a person's social network has a higher potential cost than all the other forms of intended behaviour being measured. There is also empirical evidence to suggest that Facebook use and the behaviours conducted on the platform are aimed at the formation and maintenance of social capital (Ellison et al., 2007).

The theoretical and managerial implications of these findings are further discussed in the concluding chapter. The next section discusses the results obtained in relation to social immediacy.

7.2.2 Social immediacy in online environments

This section focuses on the effects found from social immediacy and four consumer engagement behaviours. Social immediacy is found to have an effect on the behaviour of others online and offline. Social immediacy, in the form of receiving a message from a friend versus receiving it from a brand that is paying for it, significantly determined the intentions of the users to engage in Page Liking, Content Liking and Content Commenting behaviours. The implications of these results are discussed under social impact theory (SIT), construal level theory (CLT) and strength of weak ties (SWT) theory.

Within social impact theory, social immediacy has been a type of immediacy that has been rarely tested. However construal level theory (CLT) has provided substantial evidence that social immediacy determines behavioural and perceptive outcomes. Low social immediacy has been found to determine the seats that people choose in different settings (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994; Mooney, Cohn, & Swift, 1992). People tend to seat themselves close to other people who are socially more immediate to them (e.g. in terms of

gender or ethnicity). Social immediacy also affects how people interact with others in the form of politeness, with higher levels of politeness elicited in socially immediate interactions (P. Brown, 1987). Furthermore, in the context of marketing, social immediacy also affects how peer reviews are assessed by a target. Recommendations are more persuasive for high social immediacy sources, moderated by the time in which the decision will impact the source (Zhao and Xie, 2011). In line with the finding of the studies mentioned above, social immediacy in this case also affected the generation of certain engagement behaviours of users with Facebook fan pages. Participants in this study presented higher intentions to engage with the brand when that message was coming from someone socially close to them (high immediacy). In the context of social advertising, social immediacy proved to have a similar effect to the findings of this research. Higher click-through rates were found for advertising endorsed by someone the target already knew. Hence, similar effects are found for brand content that is coming from those type of sources (Li et al., 2012). These outcomes are also supported by the findings from the focus groups performed for this study. Content from close friends was treated as particularly especial in social media settings, to the level that almost unconditional attention is given to this type of content, and it is more likely to experience a form of engagement (liking, sharing and commenting).

The strength of weak theory (SWT) might also explain why the intention to share was also significantly higher when high social immediacy was present. SWT posits that strong tie relationships (high social immediacy) are more likely to involve have a greater amount of information flow between the dyads, and also the participants have a greater degree of influence over each other (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973; Leonard-Barton, 1985; Reingen and Kernan, 1986). This was true in terms of the intended interaction shown in the experiment in terms of page liking, content liking, and content sharing and commenting.

Social immediacy also appears to have a positive effect on the perception of the brand by the users. In a series of experiments, high social immediacy (i.e. messages coming from friends) elicit higher levels of consumer engagement behaviours. According to CLT, social

immediacy determines the outcome of in-group and out-group attitudes and behaviour, by making in- groups be perceived as more positive and then facilitating collaboration, participation and compliance to certain behaviours (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Although attitudes towards the brand were not measured in the experiment conducted in this research, as they were beyond the scope, due to the fact that it was an unknown brand, the results suggest that a positive attitude was generated towards the brand when it was presented as a transferred endorsement by the friend displaying the message.

Overall, there appear to be several theoretical foundations that can explain the effects of social immediacy on the engagement behaviours being measured. Social influence coming from sources that are socially close to the target will most likely elicit higher levels of engagement behaviours. The same appears to be true for brand-consumer interactions, when messages are transmitted via a socially close source, even if the brand is not close to the user. The implications of these findings for marketing practice are examined in the concluding chapter. The next section discusses the results from the other one form of immediacy that did not show a significant positive relationship between level of immediacy and CEB: temporal immediacy.

7.2.3 Temporal immediacy in online environments

The previous section discussed the implications of the effect of physical and social immediacy on engagement behaviour online. However, a distinctive feature of the studies conducted in this thesis was that more than one form of immediacy was being measured under the same context. This provides a unique perspective on how different forms of immediacy affect behavioural outcomes online. As reported in the findings chapter, temporal immediacy was not statistically significant when measuring its effect on engagement behaviours. Before engaging in the discussion regarding the implications of these findings, this thesis will argue the importance of reporting these results and linking these findings to the literature on social impact.

7.2.4 On the importance of reporting non-significant results

This research fails to find support for some of the hypotheses derived from SIT. The absence of statistically significant evidence for the existence of the proposed relationships between the different forms of immediacy is both surprising and disappointing. However, within academia there have been repeated calls for the researchers to recognise that a non-significant result is a valid result. Indeed there have been repeated calls for the publication of non-significant results (Fagley, 1985; Hubbard & Armstrong, 1992; Armstrong, 2003). The absence of full reporting is argued to limit knowledge development, and this researcher concurs with this view, in particular for these two findings, due to its implication for marketing practice.

A study conducted by Hubbard and Armstrong (Hubbard & Armstrong, 1992) on 692 sampled papers from leading marketing journals, found that only 7.8% of them failed to reject the null hypothesis. The authors argue that is due to a tendency to only report results that reject the null hypothesis and that this is putting in peril the advancement of marketing knowledge. Similar issues were identified previously in the field of psychology, where a similar effect was occurring with detrimental effects for the field (Rosenthal, 1979). Some of the reasons behind this is that research containing null results is unlikely to be published. A survey applied to editors of 19 leading management journals found that statistically insignificant results substantially lowered the likelihood of acceptance (S. Kerr, Tolliver, & Petree, 1977). However, non-significant results should not be rejected by publishers simply because the null hypotheses were not rejected. It is adequate to reject those tests with null hypotheses and inadequate statistical power, as low statistical power relies on the significance criterion, effect size in the population and sample size (J. Cohen, 1992). Nevertheless, statistically non-significant results with high power are potential contributions to knowledge (Fagley, 1985). In the case of this thesis, the non-significant results are also presented as procedures to ensure high statistical power in terms of sample size and hypothesis testing logic, as discussed in Chapter 6.

7.2.5 Temporal immediacy in online environments

This section discusses the negative results obtained from the experiments that tested the effects of temporal immediacy on consumer engagement behaviour. The role that time (temporal immediacy) plays in affecting a consumer's judgement and behaviours has been studied from several perspectives. Time immediacy has been shown to affect consumer desire for a product (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991), how it affects consumer's reaction to outcomes (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1992) and the decision to bid in online auctions (C. M. Wood, Alford, Jackson, & Gilley, 2005). Within SIT, evidence suggests that events occurring in the near future will generate a higher social impact, and will result in people allocating more relevance to those events, as opposed to the ones that are at a more distant time (Sedikides & Jackson, 1990).

Outside SIT, Kahneman and Miller's (1986) norm theory has been used to explain the finding that people generally exhibit more intense affect when a short rather than a long temporal immediacy separates reality and imagined, alternative outcomes. According to this theory, unanticipated outcomes or events are judged in relation to norms or frames of reference, which are based on the post hoc counterfactual thoughts or images that the actual outcome brings to mind (e.g. Kahneman and Tversky 1982). Unexpected outcomes that occur within a short temporal immediacy of alternatives are thought to elicit highly available or strong alternative scenarios (Miller et al. 1989).

In this case, the level of involvement with the category could have affected the intention to perform the measured behaviours. Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran (1992) found that, when involvement is low, greater persuasion should occur when a short rather than a long temporal distance separates actual and alternative outcomes. But when issue involvement is high, such variations in temporal immediacy are likely to have little influence on persuasion.

The nature of the platform where this research was conducted could also have affected the results of these experiments. The platform uses an algorithm called Edgerank that takes into

account the social immediacy between the source and the target in terms of tie strength based on previous interactions, the degree of affinity that the target has with a particular type of content (i.e. how the user has previously interact with images, videos or text message), and time decay, which would be a form of operationalisation of temporal immediacy (Edgerank, 2014). However, prominence is given to social immediacy and content affinity, with time decay taking a less prominent role when deciding what to display in a user's newsfeed. As with physical immediacy, the message was coming from an unknown brand, thus a brand that was already yielding a low social immediacy by itself. When in interaction with a known source of information, temporal immediacy may have a significant effect on engagement behaviours. Evidence of this relationship between temporal and social immediacy appears to be supported by other studies that looked at its effects on peer recommendations (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1992; Zhao & Xie, 2011). Evidence from the focus groups can also help to clarify the lack of significant results for this immediacy. The concept of temporal immediacy appears to be not clear in the context of Facebook fan pages. Posts being showed to consumers at the moment of the experiment were immediate at that time, despite the fact they were supposed to be published a few weeks ago. Participants in the focus group indicated that when that content was relevant to them, it did not matter if it has low levels of temporal immediacy as they had high relevance and sometime high levels of social immediacy too (e.g. a wedding picture from friends was used in the focus groups).

The findings on the effect of temporal immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours with brands differs from the other two forms of immediacies. Contrary to what SIT suggests, the effect of displaying pages and content that were manipulated with regard to temporal immediacy, but that were unknown to the target appear to have affected the engagement behaviours. No differences were found when low and high temporal distance messages were shown from unknown media Facebook fan pages.

Section 2: Moderators of social influence

7.3 Moderators of social influence effects on consumer engagement behaviours

7.3.1 Product involvement and consumer engagement behaviours

Product involvement had significant effects as a covariate in two of the types of immediacies (physical and social) for several engagement behaviours (Table 43). Zaichowsky (1994) view of product involvement in terms of perceived relevance resonated with the views of the focus groups conducted for this thesis. Several of the participants agreed that brand/product relevance was one of the major determinants for engagement with that brand in online and offline environments. A product is considered to be relevant when consumers see it as a channel to perceive their intrinsic values and goals (Celsi & Olson, 1988). Previous studies have found product involvement to be an antecedent of engagement behaviours (Alversia, 2013). However, these studies did not take into account the relationship of product involvement as a mediator of immediacy's effect. The evidence from this research suggests that product involvement can affect content liking behaviour among different types of immediacies.

Table 43 Engagement behaviours moderated by product involvement

Product Involvement as moderator				
Immediacy	Page Liking	Content Liking	Content Commenting	Content Sharing
Physical	Not significant	Significant	Not significant	Not significant
Social	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Temporal	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant

The effect of product involvement appears to increase dramatically in the social immediacy condition, where product involvement moderated all the forms of engagement measured in

the experiment. Research in this aspect has found that product involvement is positively correlated to opinion leadership (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). These findings can suggest that sources in high social immediacy situations are also perceived as being opinion leaders, which in return might possible explain the results found in this study. The findings further support the conceptualisation of involvement as moderator (Hajjat, 2003) and antecedent (L. D. Hollebeek, 2011) of customer brand engagement.

7.3.2 Facebook intensity usage and consumer engagement behaviours

The inclusion of Facebook intensity usage measurement as a covariate in this experiment follows the logic that the more people use the platform, the more they will also interact with others, including fan pages (Ellison et al., 2007). However, the findings of the study (Table 44) where FIU moderated only one behaviour suggests that this variable does not have such an important role as it was expected.

Table 44 Engagement behaviours moderated by Facebook Intensity Usage (FIU)

FIU as moderator				
Immediacy	Page Liking	Content Liking	Content Commenting	Content Sharing
Physical	Significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Social	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Temporal	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant

The findings from the experiment are also supported by the qualitative phase of this research. Some of the participants that self-identified as heavy users of social media including Facebook, were also not very interactive with brands. For example, Participant 8 that was an early adopter of social media platforms and a heavy user in terms of the variables measured

by the FIU scale, did not find any value from the interaction with brands, and therefore did not follow nor like many of their content:

“I don’t really follow brands. They’re kind of useless. If I want to know something I will just go and search it online”. Participant 8 (female, 22)

Engagement with a fan page appears to be associated to other forms of uses and gratifications. Either for experiential benefits (Ching-Jui Keng, 2009; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001; Stafford et al., 2004) or in order to build a stronger self-identity and gain recognition by others (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Barker, 2009). The evidence from the qualitative study suggest as well that consumers see a social interaction value when interacting in these platforms, and that they search for recognition in this type of communities (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Recognition by others including the brand, was mentioned by some of the participants in the study:

I posted one picture of my home theatre system onto the page. Because earlier I was not really into hi-fi systems, and recently I did go with hi-fi systems, and the brand Martin Logan , it’s a very popular brand, so I just wanted to show them that I have the brand in my house now. So I just took a picture and posted it in their page. And they commented saying: -good”. Participant 12 (male, 28 years old).

7.4 Gender and consumer engagement behaviours

The results from the previous tests suggest that gender is an independent variable that can affect the results of some of the dependent variables. There are several elements in theory that support gender differences in the outcome of social influences forces. For instance, there seems to be a general agreement that other things being equal women tend to show somewhat higher levels of conformity than men, and this is supported by several other experiments

(Cooper, 1979; Eagly & Carli, 1981; R. E. Guadagno & Cialdini, 2002). In a recent study by Guadagno and Cialdini (2002) it was found that women tended to conform more when previous interaction existed with the source, whereas for men this tendency was not found.

Another study that supports that gender differences to conform exist is a meta-analytical study that included 148 studies where group pressure and conformity were evaluated by Eagly and Carli (1981). The two researchers updated a previous study to determine if gender was an important determinant of likelihood to conform. Their results show that women were more persuasible than men, and that they were conforming more than men in group pressure situations. These results appear conclusive, due to the number of studies that were used to analyse independent variable gender on the dependent variable on conformity. Yet when analysed in detail, the results suggest that in situations where no direct pressure is applied, even though women resulted to be more persuasible, the difference in influenceability between genders is small in magnitude.

In this case, no direct pressure was applied to participants to conform to certain levels of interaction with the brands. Yet intentions to engage with the brand were also higher for some of the behaviours being measured, especially in the social immediacy condition. This suggests that the level of social impact of a page increases engagement behaviours when the message is coming from someone the source knows, and this effect is heightened among female participants. Similar effects are found for temporal distance for some of the engagement behaviours being measured.

7.5 Social impact theory in social media settings

The findings of this research also support the extension of social impact theory into social media settings to explain and predict behavioural outcomes. The empirical evidence from the application of the theory in this context is still very limited, and this research contributes to expanding that body of evidence. The findings extend the support towards the existence of

social impact factors in this environment, in particular in the form of social immediacy. Other studies have extended the theory by testing the effects of immediacy on different behavioural outcomes; however the novelty of this research comes from the multiple forms of immediacies that were tested in a single environment and for similar behavioural outcomes. Other studies have only used physical immediacy as a determinant factor (See Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Mir and Zaheer, 2012) and, as discussed in section 8.2, the evidence in this research suggest that just looking at one form of immediacy in these settings may offer a biased perspective on the effects that immediacy has as a social impact factor. The empirical results further support the non-fallibility of the theory when applied in these settings, and further expands the domain of immediacy by providing empirical evidence on the social type.

7.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has presented a discussion aimed to explain the results obtained in the focus groups and three studies conducted in this thesis. From the three types of immediacies being measured as determinants of consumer engagement behaviours, physical and social immediacy showed a significant effect on the outcomes measured. However, the findings that temporal immediacy did not affect engagement behaviours in these settings are of importance for the development of SIT in this context. It shows that immediacy as operationalised in the theory can show a determinant effect when certain types of immediacy are present. This calls for the measurement of more than one form of immediacy when attempting to predict the social impact of an online presence. This also calls for a wider focus on immediacy beyond physical distance, and to incorporate more durable types, such as social immediacy. The chapter has also provided a discussion on how these findings link back to the theory of social impact, as well as to other theories related to social influence. In particular, this research also informs construal level theory, which looks at the effects of different types of distance (immediacies) on the construal of objects and actions. Unlike CLT, that suggests an equal relationship between immediacies, the evidence from this research suggests that those relationships do not hold when immediacy is operationalised as a determinant of social influence. The evidence provided in this chapter also looked at the role that product involvement and intensity usage of the platform has on CEBs. While the role of

product involvement appear to be crucial when moderating the effects of immediacy on CEBs, Facebook intensity usage was not as relevant as it was first expected.

The findings also contribute to the provision of evidence that social influence factors affect at a meso level the behavioural outcomes that can occur in social media environments. This adds to the body of empirical research that shows that behavioural outcomes in these environments are subject to social influence, and therefore they can be manipulated by website owners and marketing professionals in order to increase the level of engagement with their content. Finally, the findings further support SIT as a strong predictive theory on behaviours in a relatively unexplored environment, the case of social media websites and Facebook fan pages. The following, concluding chapter it will demonstrate how the aim and the different sets of objectives of this thesis have been fulfilled by the empirical research and the literature review. The limitations and future research opportunities are also identified.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Chapter introduction

This is the final chapter of this thesis and serves as a concluding chapter by highlighting the contributions of this research. The chapter discusses the contributions of this thesis at a theoretical, contextual and managerial level. It then presents the limitations of the studies conducted in this thesis and sets future research avenues, ending with a general conclusion for the thesis.

Section 1: Fulfilling the aim

8.2 Measuring the effects of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours in social media

The aim of this research is to measure the degree of social influence that the construct of immediacy can have on customer engagement behaviours with brands in social media settings. Immediacy, for the purposes of this study is considered to be a construct that refers to the distance relationship existing between a target and a source of influence. It can be operationalised in different forms, and it is considered under social impact theory as a factor of social influence (J. M. Jackson & Latane, 1982). In Chapter 2 it was argued, based on the conceptualisation of the theory and empirical evidence, that immediacy is not limited to physical distance relationships between source and target of influence, but it can also take the form of social and temporal immediacy.

Evidence of the effects of different types of immediacies on behavioural outcomes in offline environments led to the research propositions of this thesis that similar effects could be found in online consumer engagement behaviours. Increasing interest in social influence marketing by academics (Eytan Bakshy, Eckles, Yan, & Rosenn, 2012; Li et al., 2012; Schaefer, 2012) and marketing practitioners (eMarketer, 2013a; Grimes, 2013; eMarketer, 2014b) make the

investigation of other social influence forces pertinent, especially when applied to valued consumer engagement behaviours. Immediacy in online environments differs to that in offline ones, where, for instance, physical immediacy effects can be reduced through computer-mediated interactions, or temporal immediacy can change into synchronous and asynchronous modalities within the same social media platform.

Based on the empirical results of this thesis, an immediacy that appears to remain intact is social immediacy, as the social relationships that are built with friends and family, or with people that share similar interests to us transcends offline and online environments. Physical immediacy on the other hand, appears to be losing its effect in online environments. Both the empirical evidence collected and the corresponding data analysis support the prominence of social immediacy over other forms of immediacy in Facebook brand fan pages. The contribution of these findings at theoretical, contextual and managerial levels is considered in the following g sections.

8.3 Reviewing the objectives

Having fulfilled the overarching aim of the research, this section now reviews each of the objectives in turn and the contribution to knowledge that each makes. Objectives 1 and 2 underpin the principal theoretical contribution in this thesis, the exploration and measurement of the effects of immediacy, within social impact theory, in consumer behaviour in social media settings, whereas Objectives 3 and 4 highlight the contextual contribution: the identification and measurement of moderating factors that affect the relationships proposed in the first two objectives and that apply to this specific context.

Section 2: Contributions of the research

8.4 Theoretical contributions

Objective 1: To explore if immediacy is a social influence determinant in online contexts.

This thesis provides evidence that at the most general level, immediacy can have effects on consumer behaviour in online contexts. The construct of immediacy has been conceptualised within social impact theory as one of the factors that can influence changes in consumers' attitudes, feelings and behaviours (Latane, 1981). The theory has been applied in different offline and online environments, and this thesis adds to the body of evidence that support this relationship in new online environments such as Facebook fan pages. Several studies that tested SIT in online environments focused on the effect of other factors proposed by this theory. For instance, Mir and Zaheer (2012) found that a number of sources affected the attitudes and credibility towards user-generated content (UGC) while Neelima et al. (2012) also confirmed the effects of social immediacy on the perception of trustworthiness of UGC. Thus, these findings complement other empirical studies that use SIT in this context, by providing evidence that confirm the effect of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours.

Further expanding this contribution into the marketing field, the evidence suggests that physical and social immediacy affect the intention to perform consumer engagement behaviours. Marketing literature on this topic has focused on consumer-based, firm-based, and context based variables as antecedents of such behaviour (Van Doorn et al., 2010b) and there is little empirical work on the role of social influence forces as determinants of this behaviour. More specifically, this research expands the work of Kang and Schuett (2013) who focused on social influence processes as factors of social influence over sharing behaviour. Their findings suggest that internalisation and identification positively increase sharing behaviour; however, their study has the limitations that their effects on other common types of engagement behaviours were not empirically measured. This thesis adds to the empirical work by testing a theoretically derived model on different forms of engagement behaviour that are of great importance for marketing practitioners (eMarketer, 2014a). In

addition, this research expands beyond social influence types as elements of influence. Building on the work of Schu-Chuan and Yoojung (2011), which focused on eWOM, which would include generating comments on a social networking site, this study focuses on more specific aspect of social influence (i.e. physical ,social and temporal immediacy), which gives a finer grained picture of the social influence effect of these factors on these types of behaviour. Thus the findings of this research provide supplementary support to the proposition that consumer engagement behaviours are subject to social influence forces.

Objective 2: To explore and measure if different forms of immediacy have the same effect on consumer behaviours in social media settings.

Research on immediacy under social impact theory has mainly focus on one type, with a clear preference towards physical immediacy. This was evidenced in the literature review (Chapter 2) and is the major research gap identified in this thesis and that this research is fulfilling. This research provides novel evidence of how different types of immediacy affect behaviour in online environments. As discussed in Chapter 7, the results from these studies support the argument that immediacy as a determinant of social influence does not equally affect all engagement behaviours with Facebook brand fan pages. This is a debate that was never raised by Latané et al. (Bibb Latané et al., 1995) or other researchers using the theory, and this thesis results open the discussion as to whether previous studies that measured the effects of immediacy as a social impact factor with negative results may have been measuring a type of immediacy that was not relevant for the context being used. Some of the detractors of SIT (Mullen, 1985, 1986) argue that in offline environments, immediacy was a weak predictor of behavioural outcomes. Yet the studies that were included in the meta-analyses only operationalised immediacy as physical (i.e. proximity to audience, distance between 2 cities and distance in an image). To the author's knowledge this is the only study to have measured the effects of immediacy within the same contexts using more than one form of immediacy. This clearly opens an opportunity for further research to determine the full extent to which the effects of different types of immediacy vary and to deepen our understanding of immediacy as a social influence construct.

The theoretical contribution of this research is further supported by the fact that the context selected to measure the effects of immediacy is novel and understudied. Other empirical online studies have mainly been conducted in Web 1.0 settings (e.g. one-to-one chats, email and forums). This research provides further evidence to add to academic research into social media and Web 2.0 settings, allowing the theory to be applied and empirically tested in other contexts to examine its robustness (Kwahk & Ge, 2012; Li et al., 2012; Mir & Zaheer, 2012; Naylor et al., 2012; Neelima, Singh, Singh, & IbotombiSingh, 2013).

8.5 Contextual Contribution

Objective 3: To explore social influence moderators in social media environments

Objective 4: To measure the effect of other factors, such as product involvement and platform intensity usage, as moderators of online interactions between consumers and brands in social media settings.

The context of this research is social media websites. Research into social media websites is growing in both academic and practitioner's literature. Its current form emerged a decade ago, and since then research has been moving from conceptually defining and classifying the different types of social media websites (Kietzmann et al., 2011; A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009) to contextualising the impact and behaviours that occur in this context (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Naylor et al., 2012; Chan & Guillet, 2011). Social media websites have been widely recognised as an important medium that facilitates social influence between the users and the brands present there (Gass & Seiter, 2013; Chan & Guillet, 2011). This influence can come from the levels of social presence that can be achieved in this medium, as they offer a mean of communication and interaction that is rich in nature, with vast amounts of information that yield social influence that can be easily transmitted (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It is in this context that further evidence of how elements present in social media websites can influence the perception and behaviours of their users. To date, the focus has been on the types of messages that are shared (in the form of word-of-mouth) and how they influence consumers perceptions and intentions to buy from certain brands (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Chen, Fay, & Wang, 2011; Xiang & Gretzel,

2010). Yet social influence factors present in the sources (or creators) of these messages remains an emerging topic, in particular when looking at consumer-brand interactions (Naylor et al., 2012; Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). The application of a model derived from Social Impact theory in the context of social media is relevant, due to the increasing use of social advertising by some of the major social networking sites (Li et al., 2012). This research adds to the body of studies that found that social influence factors, and in this case physical and social immediacy in particular, are determinants for positive behavioural outcomes of consumer-brand interactions in these environments (Eytan Bakshy et al., 2012; Li et al., 2012; Y.-M. Li & Shiu, 2012; E. Bakshy et al., 2011).

This research builds on this body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how social impact factors translate in the context of social media websites. The findings point towards a reframing of SIT when applied in social media settings, as forms of immediacy that have traditionally been shown to have an effect in offline environments (i.e. physical and temporal) seem to be less relevant than more social ones. Yet social media websites are based on the principle of socialisation and the construction of social networks within their platforms. A key feature of social media websites is the building of relationships among the members (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and thus social immediacy within this context appears to have a higher impact than that given to it by other studies.

Besides the examined relationship between immediacy and consumer engagement behaviours, this research also aim to explore other factors that can influence or moderate the effects of these immediacies. In particular, this research found that product involvement is a key factor that moderates the effect that immediacy can have. The degree of relevance of a certain product and product category has been found to affect attention to advertisement (Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994), brand loyalty (H.-C. Wang et al., 2006) and brand commitment to the brand (Gordon, McKeage, & Fox, 1998; Warrington & Shim, 2000). The evidence found in this thesis further supports that the attention given to content in social media and willingness to engage with a brand in this environment is also moderated by this construct.

Section 3: Limitations and future research

8.6 Limitations

In this subsection the limitations of this research are discussed in terms of its external validity, model sufficiency and contextual limitations.

8.6.1 External validity limitations: sample bias

This research purposively chose a group of students as an ideal sample due to its homogeneous nature and the theory testing objectives of this research. However, this choice entails certain limitations. In section 5.11, which discussed the methodological procedures, including sampling selection, it was argued that as this research aims at theory testing rather than theory for application, the use of a homogeneous sample was the most appropriate (Calder et al., 1981). Thus the use of students coming from a narrow range of years within the same field of study would provide this. The homogeneity of the sample helped to improve the internal validity of the study, by reducing the number of external variations (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, in order to fully support the external validity of these findings, further research into other homogenous and heterogeneous samples is needed. Further research in other homogeneous samples and with other groups of students would improve the external validity of the findings in this research.

8.6.2 Predictive validity limitations

This research used intentions to measure engagement behaviours. Despite the extensive evidence that suggest that intentions are strong predictors of actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage, 2001) the inclusion of future criterion measurements would increase the predictive validity of these findings (Bryman, 2012). Research on actual Facebook fan pages and by modifying some of the forms of immediacy measured in this study (e.g. messages coming

from friends vs. message generated by brand only) with contemporary and future measurements would contribute to overcoming this limitation.

8.7 Model sufficiency: limitations in the selection of dependent variables

Another limitation is that this thesis developed a model that used certain types of consumer engagement behaviours based on the type of engagement behaviours that can occur in the context used and the type of behaviours that are relevant for practitioners. As a result, four types of consumer engagement behaviours were selected: Page Liking, Content Liking, Content Sharing and Content Commenting. However, the type of interactions that can occur on Facebook and other social media platforms are wider. Users can tag friends, can link their usernames to brands, can post on fan pages, can leave reviews on pages, users can “check-in” in businesses, plus any other new feature that might be added in the future. Extending the research to other forms of consumer engagement behaviours will provide further evidence on what other forms of CEBs are also subject to the effect of social immediacy. Other types of social media websites may also have different types of interactions, depending on how the platform is designed. For instance, Twitter users can retweet, favourite or reply to tweet in that platform, or Foursquare users can check-in into businesses, leave reviews, and win badges, among other interactions. Extending the research to other platforms could also provide supporting evidence for the findings presented in this thesis.

8.8 Contextual limitations

8.8.1 Limitations based on platform selection: Using Facebook brand fan pages

The context in which this research was conducted has some limitations. As highlighted in the discussion section (section 6.5), the findings of this research support the argument that physical immediacy positively affects two of the CEBs being measured. However it was also pointed out that the platform selected (i.e. Facebook) is a platform that has all of the

functionalities identified by Kietzmann et al. (Kietzmann et al., 2011) with a focus towards building relationship. However, in Figure 5 it was also highlighted that other platforms favour certain functionalities over others. For instance platforms such as Foursquare are based on location (geographical presence) while platforms such as Twitter favour temporal immediacy (presence). The decision to measure in one platform all the forms of immediacy was made in order to ensure internal validity, by providing the least exogenous variations to the ones being manipulated. However it could be possible that using platforms that prime other functions might result in other forms of immediacy becoming more relevant than others.

8.8.2 Limitations based on product category selection: beverages and news

Finally, there is the limitation that the categories used in the experiment were limited to beverages and news. A more diverse selection of categories could provide evidence of whether the relationships found in these experiments between the types of immediacies and CEBs have the same direction and significance for other categories. As it was acknowledged by some of the participants in the focus groups, certain product categories elicit higher involvement and this can lead to engagement with the brand regardless of the platform.

8.9 Future research

The limitations identified in the previous section provide guidance to avenues for future research. Table 45 summarises the future research avenues that identified based on these limitations. Firstly, in order to expand the body of evidence regarding social media websites, it is necessary to continue to provide supportive evidence in the form of tests on other homogeneous samples (including students) as well as tests with representative samples based on the demographic structure of each of the platforms (Calder et al., 1981).

Table 45- Future research avenues

Future research	
Sample (Methodology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other homogenous samples • Heterogeneous samples
CEBs (Dependent Variable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other forms of interactions within Facebook. • Other forms of interactions in other social media platforms. • Negative behaviours (complaints, reviews) • Word-of-mouth
Platform (Context)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media platforms that prime different functionalities
Categories (Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other product/service categories.

Another element to consider for future research relates to the dependent variable, consumer engagement behaviours. The focus of this research was on intended behaviours on one platform. To expand research to other forms of interaction as well as behaviours with valence (negative/positive) is a natural step to continue developing research on social impact in social media settings. Research on other forms of consumer engagement behaviours have focused on CEB manifestations such as word-of-mouth (Chu & Yoojung, 2011) complaining behaviour (Blodgett, 1993; Wan, 2013) and generation of reviews (Chen et al., 2011; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2003). Extending this work including social influence factors such as the ones identified in this thesis would contribute to consolidating research on social influence marketing.

Future research should also take into account other social media contexts. Facebook is indeed the most popular social media website in terms of users ("Facebook Newsroom," 2013; Business Insider, 2014); however, the range of platforms available is vast and focuses on certain niches, for example, social media websites focused on professionals (e.g. LinkedIn, Viadeo) or by type of profession (e.g. Behance). The motivations behind the use of these platforms could be different compared to those for platforms that focus on meeting new people (e.g. Tinder) or on a particular medium (e.g. YouTube, Instagram) (Ling et al., 2005).

Therefore a finer grained view, to determine if the relationship between certain types of immediacy is context dependent, is also important.

Finally extending the research to other product categories and services is also productive. Motivations to interact are also different between a product that is physically constrained (e.g. a restaurant) and one that is not (e.g. a fizzy drink). Differences could also be expected for services or products that exist only online (East, Hammond, & Wright, 2007).

8.10 Chapter conclusion

This research has measured the effects of three types of immediacy on consumer engagement behaviours towards Facebook brand fan pages. This has provided several theoretical and contextual contributions. From a theoretical perspective, this research has extended the application of social impact theory into a particular social media environment. It has also provided evidence that one of the factors suggested by the theory (immediacy) affects behavioural outcomes at different levels, depending on the type of influence factor being used. In this particular context, physical immediacy had a positive effect on Page Liking and Liking intentions, while social immediacy proved to have positive effects on Page Liking, Content Liking, and Content Sharing intentions.

This thesis has provided evidence that social immediacy as a social influence factor positively affects engagement intentions to engagement behaviours on Facebook brand fan pages. The findings in this thesis also make a contribution towards consumer engagement theory, which is an emerging field of study in marketing. Consumer engagement is a state in the consumers that reflects different levels of involvement, interaction, intimacy and influence towards a focal brand (Haven & Vittal, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 3, manifestations of this state are CEBs. Engagement is important for both marketing academics and practitioners in terms of its repercussions on consumer attitudes and behaviours. This study focused on behavioural outcomes of engagement in the context of Facebook fan pages. Engagement outcomes are

amongst the top priorities for marketing practitioners (eMarketer, 2014a) and one of the dimensions of engagement studied by academics (Van Doorn et al., 2010b).

The results obtained in this research in this thesis call for further research into social influence in social media settings. The changes caused by the establishment of Web 2.0 and the emergence of new online environments which continue to rapidly develop and foster consumer-brand interactions have significant implications for marketing professionals. This underlines the need for sound academic research which can provide and analyse empirical evidence to develop and constantly update marketing theory, in order to reflect the changes that consumers experience as new environments and new communication mediums are made available to them. Ultimately, what this research demonstrates is that as Social Media continue to shrink the world, geographical and temporal distance becomes increasingly less important, whilst social relationships significantly develop in importance and transcend the boundaries between off-line and on-line environments.

Rodrigo Perez Vega

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Physical Immediacy Survey	295
Appendix 2- Social Immediacy Survey	324
Appendix 3 – Temporal Immediacy Survey	351
Appendix 4: Study 1	380
Appendix 5: Study 2	382
Appendix 6: Study 3	384
Appendix 7: Survey of pilot study 1	386
Appendix 8: Focus group guide	399
Appendix 9: Immediacy and first language.	405

Appendix 1 – Physical Immediacy Survey

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

1. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ Yes, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ No, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is your first language?

5. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes
☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2:

6. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post from **a Scottish brand of soft drinks**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by putting a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Page/Profile Name	Post's image
Page/Profile Picture	Post's number of "Likes"
"Like Page" Button	Post's number of "comments"
Post's content	Post's number of "Shares"
Location of the post	



SECTION 3:

7. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like Comment Share

1,283 Likes 19 Comments 168 Shares

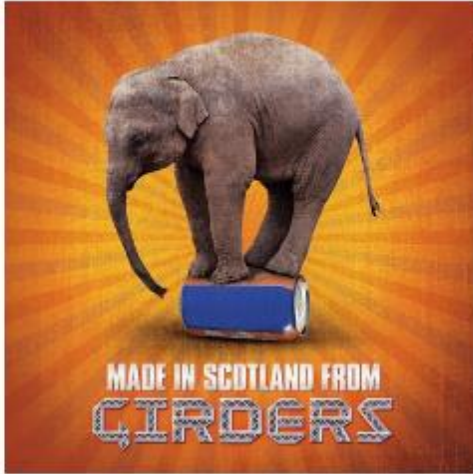

Write a comment...

SCOTTISH SOFT DRINK BRAND

2 February near Edinburgh

Like Page

Cannae be crushed, just in case you'd forgotten.

MADE IN SCOTLAND FROM GIRDERS

Like Comment Share

186 Likes 10 Comments 1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

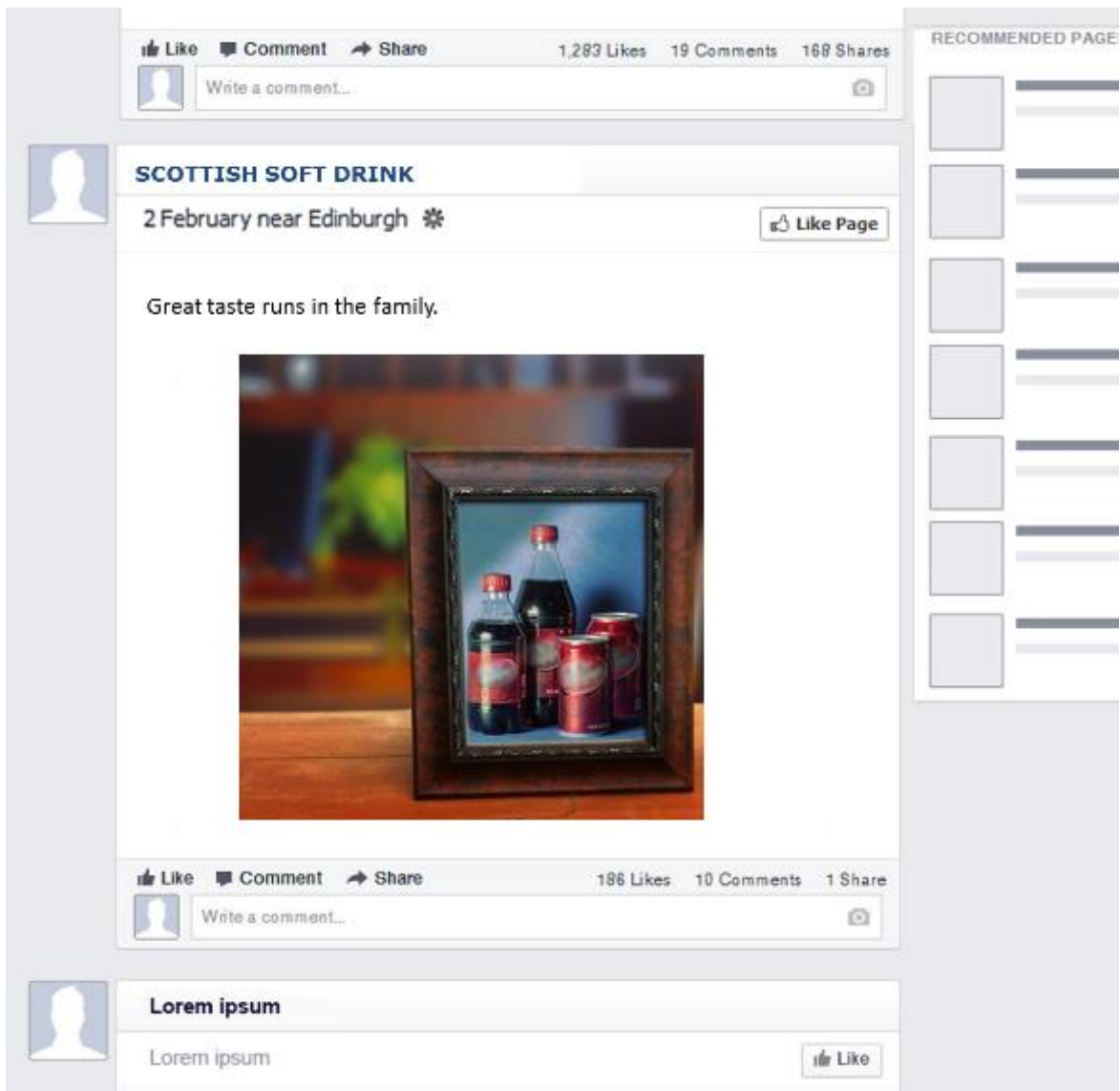
Write a comment...

Like

RECOMMENDED PAGE

8. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the “ Like Page ” button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



9. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge SOFT DRINKS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me SOFT DRINKS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: Your Facebook usage

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

10. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

11. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

12. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

13. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

14. Please indicate how geographically distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Very Geographically Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Geographically Close

15. Please indicate the country of origin of this beverage: _____.

FINAL DISCLOSURE AND OPT-OUT

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

In addition, there will be a draw for a £30 Amazon voucher that will be held on the 13th of February. If you wish to participate please leave your email address below. You will receive a link with the Livestream of the draw, and you will be notified if you result the winner of it.

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

16. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

17. What is your age?

18. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

5 What is your first language?

19. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2:

There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post taken from **an American brand of soft drinks**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by putting a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Page/Profile Name	Post's image
Page/Profile Picture	Post's number of "Likes"
"Like Page" Button	Post's number of "comments"
Post's content	Post's number of "Shares"
Location of the post	



SECTION 3:

Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share

1,283 Likes

19 Comments

168 Shares


Write a comment...

SOFT DRINK BRAND - US

2 February near Atlanta, GA, United States · 🌐

Like Page

Struggle to contain your excitement when given a delicious gift?
What's the worst that could happen? [#pufferfish](#)



Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes

10 Comments

1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

Lorem ipsum

Like

RECOMMENDED PAGE

308

Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share

1,283 Likes

19 Comments

168 Shares

Write a comment...

SOFT DRINK BRAND - US

2 February near Atlanta, GA, United States · 🌐

Like Page

Great taste runs in the family.



Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes

10 Comments

1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

Lorem ipsum

Like

RECOMMENDED PAGE

310

The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge SOFT DRINKS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me SOFT DRINKS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: Your Facebook usage

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how geographically distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Very Geographically Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Geographically Close

Please indicate the country of origin of this beverage: _____.

FINAL DISCLOSURE AND OPT-OUT

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

In addition, there will be a draw for a £30 Amazon voucher that will be held on the 13th of February. If you wish to participate please leave your email address below. You will receive a link with the Livestream of the draw, and you will be notified if you result the winner of it.

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

20. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

21. What is your age?

22. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

6 What is your first language?

23. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2:

There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post from **a brand of soft drinks**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 8 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 8 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 8 the LEAST important. You may do so by putting a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Page/Profile Name
Page/Profile Picture
“Like Page” Button
Post’s content

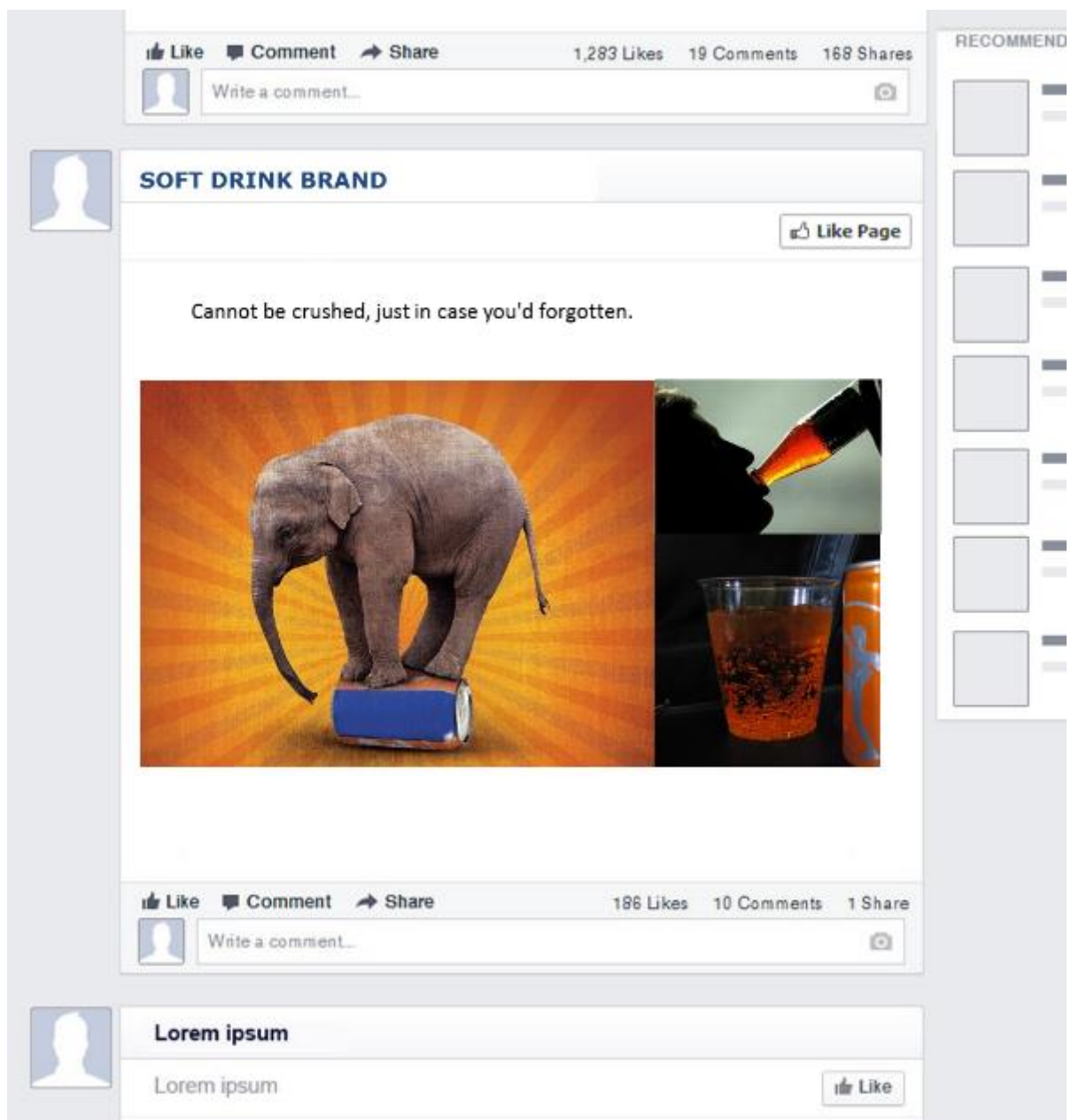
Post’s image
Post’s number of “Likes”
Post’s number of “comments”
Post’s number of “Shares”



SECTION 3:

Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

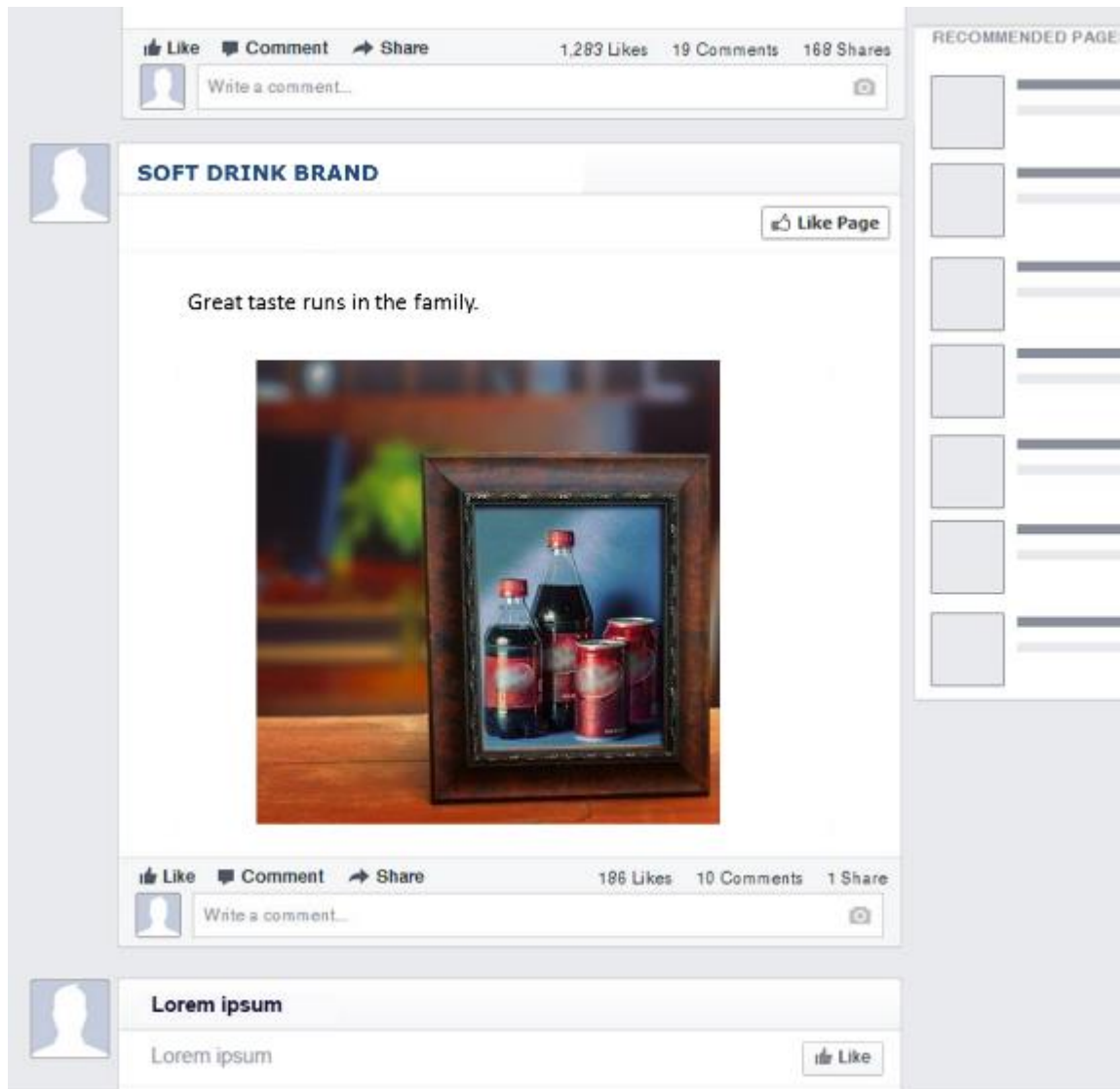


Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being "Very Unlikely" and 7 being "Very likely")

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

I would click on the “Like Page” button
on the top of this post

Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge SOFT DRINKS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me SOFT DRINKS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: Your Facebook usage

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how geographically distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Very Geographically Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Geographically Close

Please indicate the country of origin of this beverage: _____

FINAL DISCLOSURE AND OPT-OUT

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

In addition, there will be a draw for a £30 Amazon voucher that will be held on the 13th of February. If you wish to participate please leave your email address below. You will receive a link with the Livestream of the draw, and you will be notified if you result the winner of it.

Email address:

Appendix 2- Social Immediacy Survey

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

4. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ Yes, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ No, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

5. What is your age?

6. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

7. What is your first language?

5. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes

No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

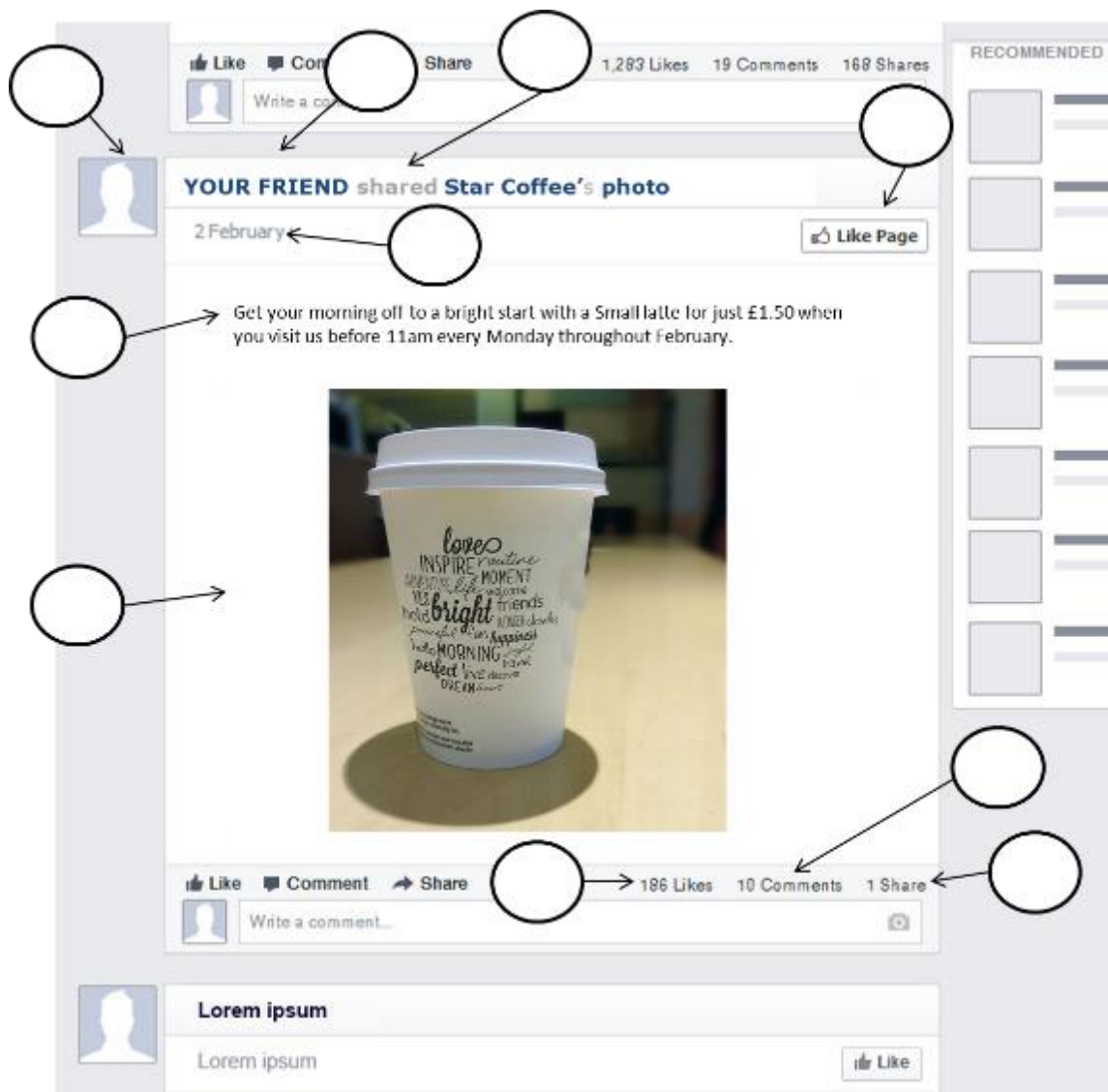
6. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post from **a Coffee shop that has been shared by one of your** friends from University. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Page/Profile Name
Page/Profile Picture
“Like Page” Button
Post’s content
Date of the post

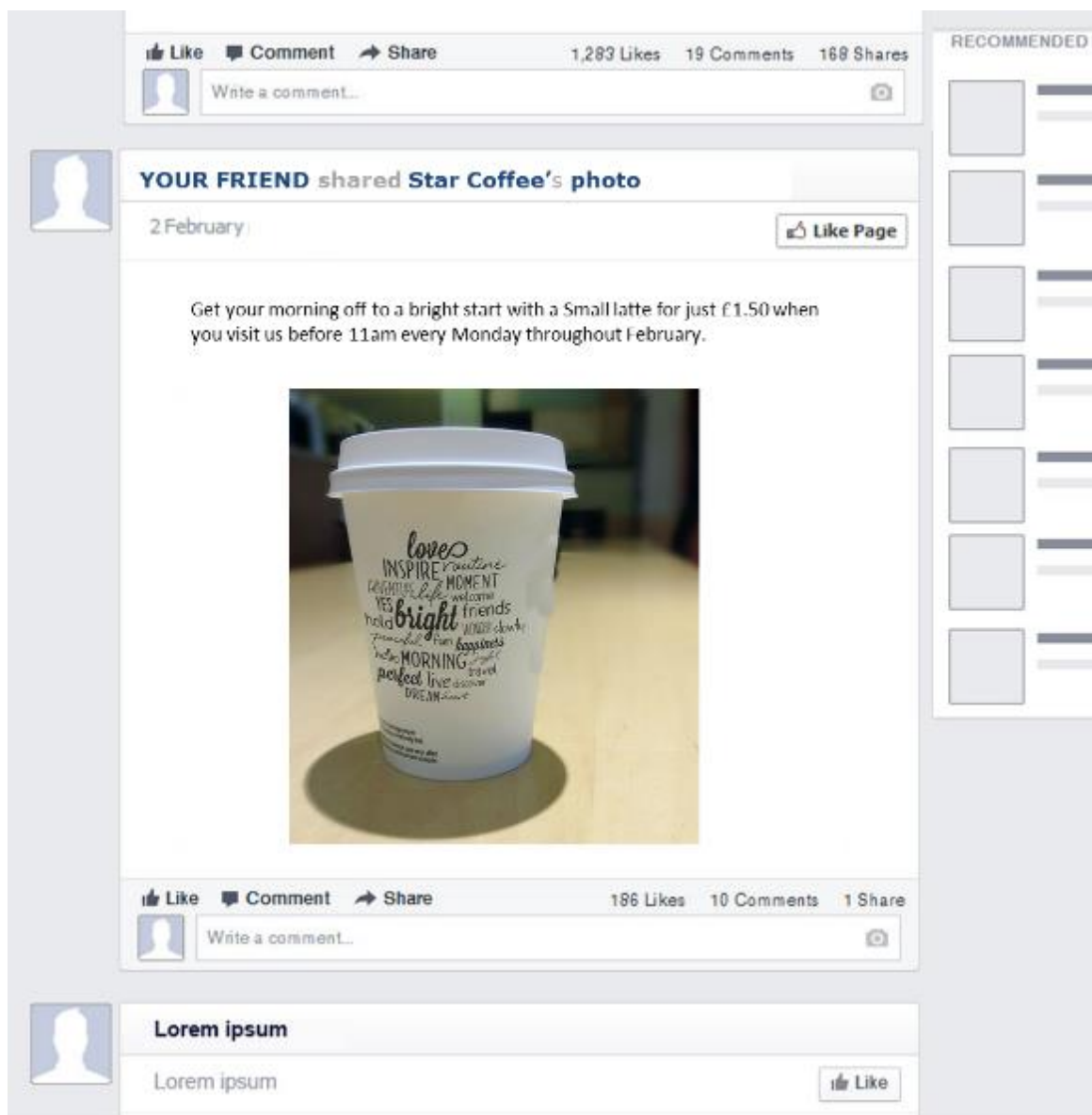
Post’s image
Post’s number of “Likes”
Post’s number of “comments”
Post’s number of “Shares”
Nature of post (Shared)



SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

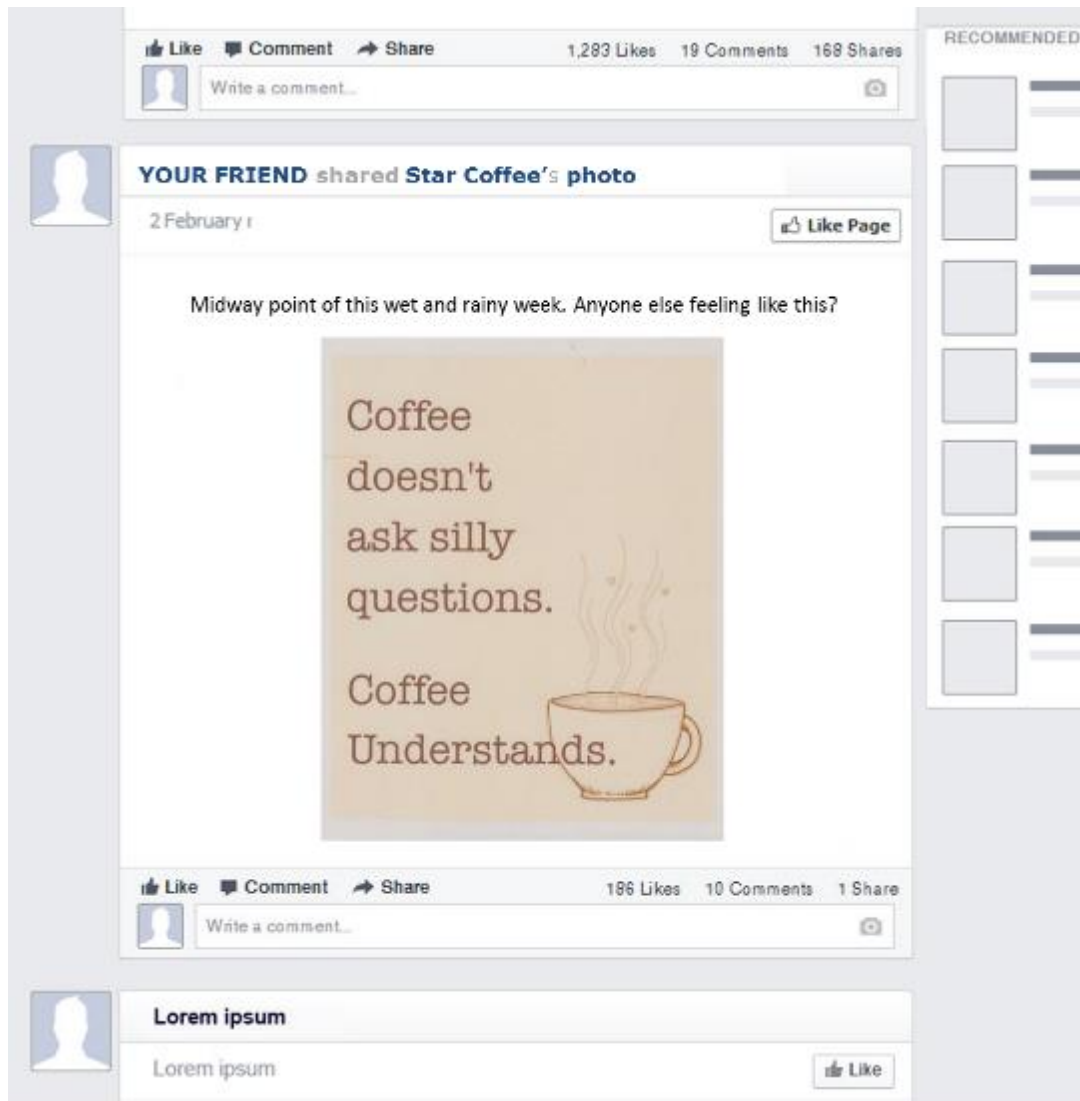
7. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post shared by one of your friends if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



8. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post shared by one of your friends if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the "Like" button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the "Like Page" button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



9. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge COFFEE SHOPS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me COFFEE SHOPS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

10. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

11. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

12. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if your strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

13. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how socially distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Social distance refers the perceived similarity with those around you, in this case the content from the Facebook brand page that you just saw.

Very socially Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very socially Close

14. What type of post did you just evaluate?

Sponsored-Paid by the brand

Organic – Shared by a friend

I don't know

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

1. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is your first language?

5. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

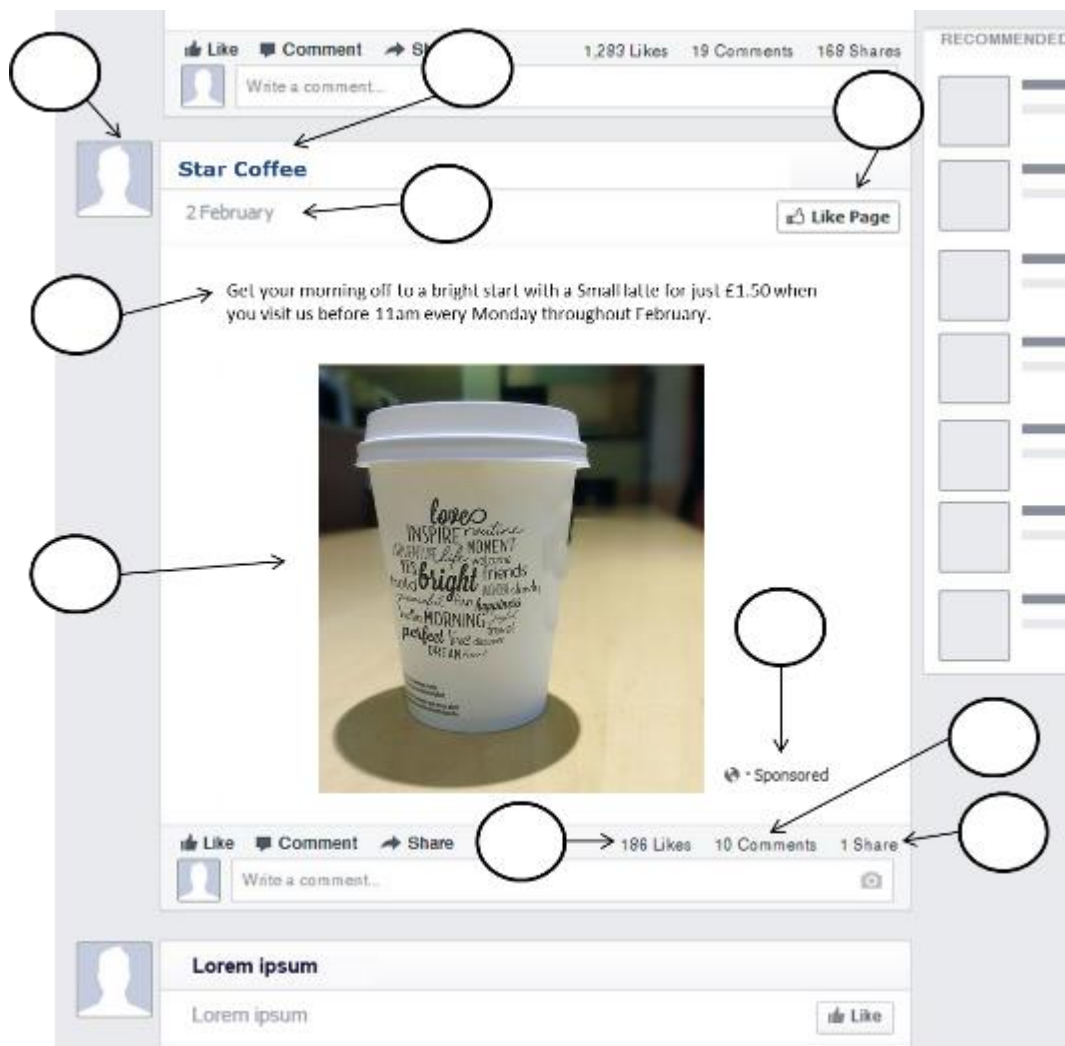
6. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following **sponsored post from a brand of Coffee Shops**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 10 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 10 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 10 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Profile Name
Profile Picture
“Like Page” Button
Post’s content
Date of the post

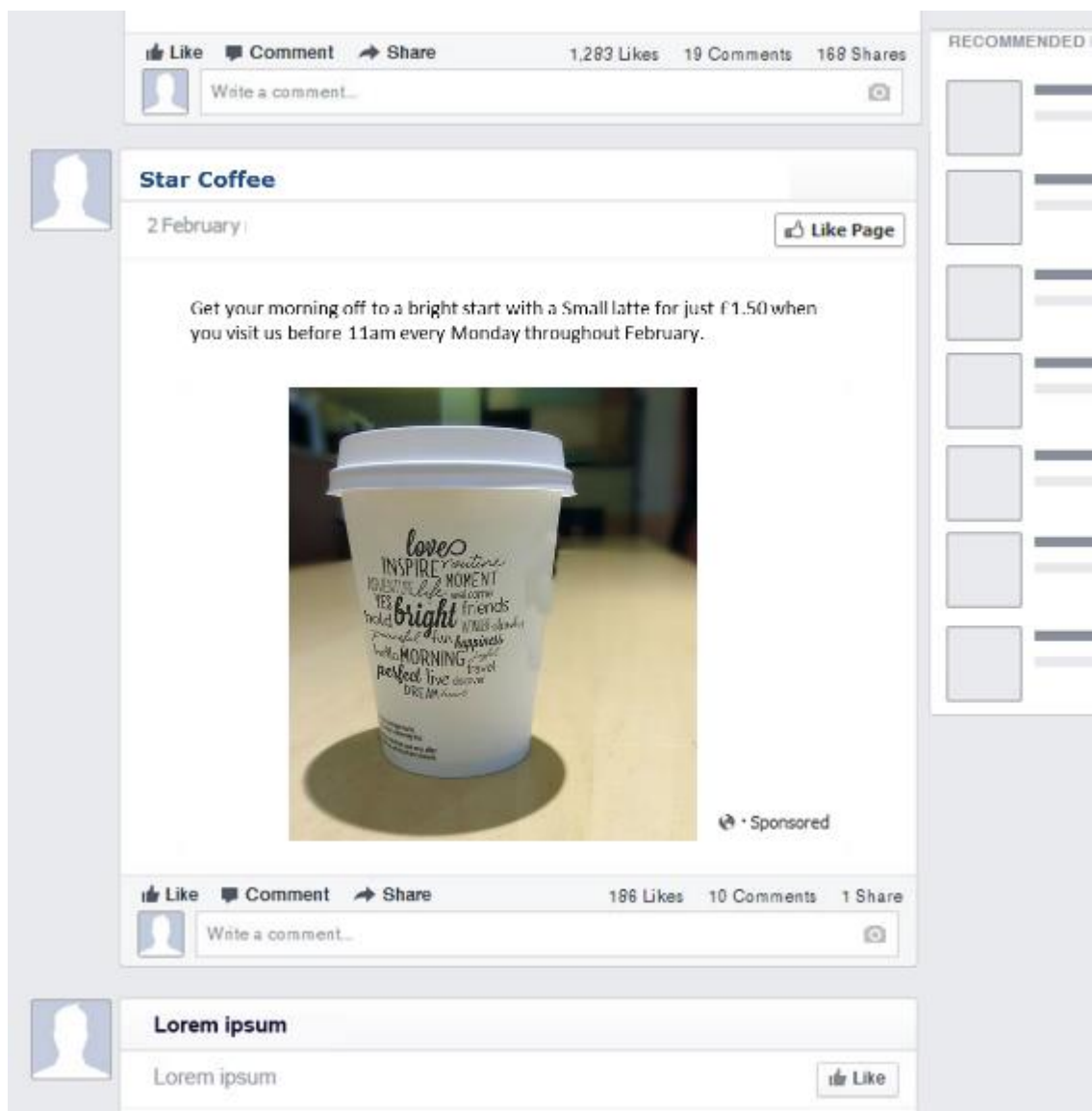
Post’s image
Post’s number of “Likes”
Post’s number of “comments”
Post’s number of “Shares”
Nature of post (Sponsored)



SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

7. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this sponsored post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



8. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this sponsored post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share

1,283 Likes19 Comments168 Shares

Write a comment...

Star Coffee

2 February

Like Page

Midway point of this wet and rainy week. Anyone else feeling like this?

Coffee
doesn't
ask silly
questions.

Coffee
Understands.



Sponsored

Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes10 Comments1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

Lorem ipsum

Like

RECOMMENDED

9. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge COFFEE SHOPS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me COFFEE SHOPS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

10. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

11. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

12. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

13. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how socially distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Social distance refers the perceived similarity with those around you, in this case the content from the Facebook brand page that you just saw.

Very socially Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very socially Close

14. What type of post did you just evaluate?

Sponsored-Paid by the brand

Organic – Shared by a friend

I don't know

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below.

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

1. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is your first language?

5. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

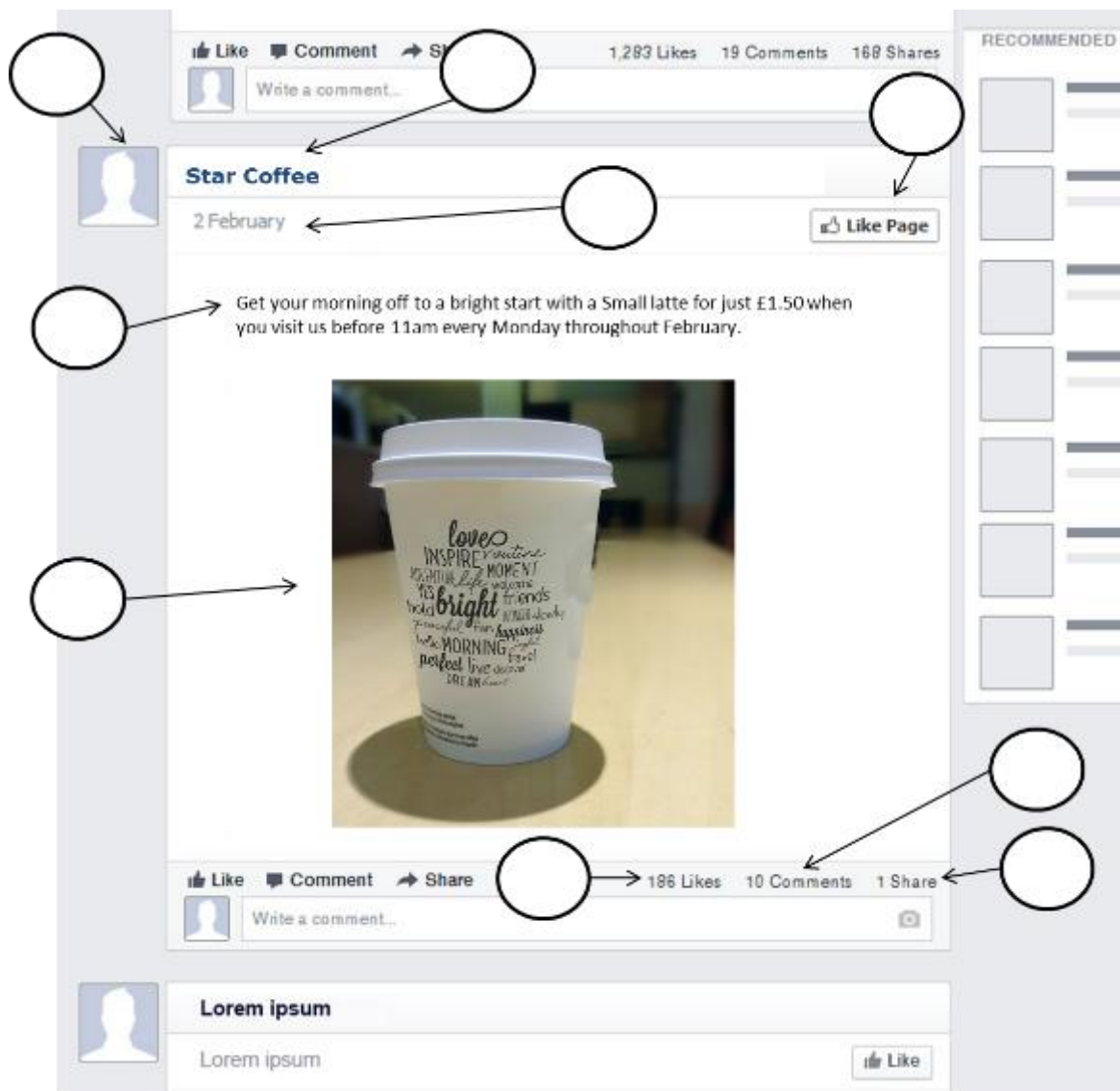
6. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following **post from a brand of Coffee Shops**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Profile Name
Profile Picture
“Like Page” Button
Post’s content
Date of the post

Post’s image
Post’s number of “Likes”
Post’s number of “comments”
Post’s number of “Shares”



SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

7. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share

1,283 Likes

19 Comments

168 Shares


Write a comment...

Star Coffee

2 February

Like Page

Get your morning off to a bright start with a Small latte for just £1.50 when you visit us before 11am every Monday throughout February.



Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes

10 Comments

1 Share

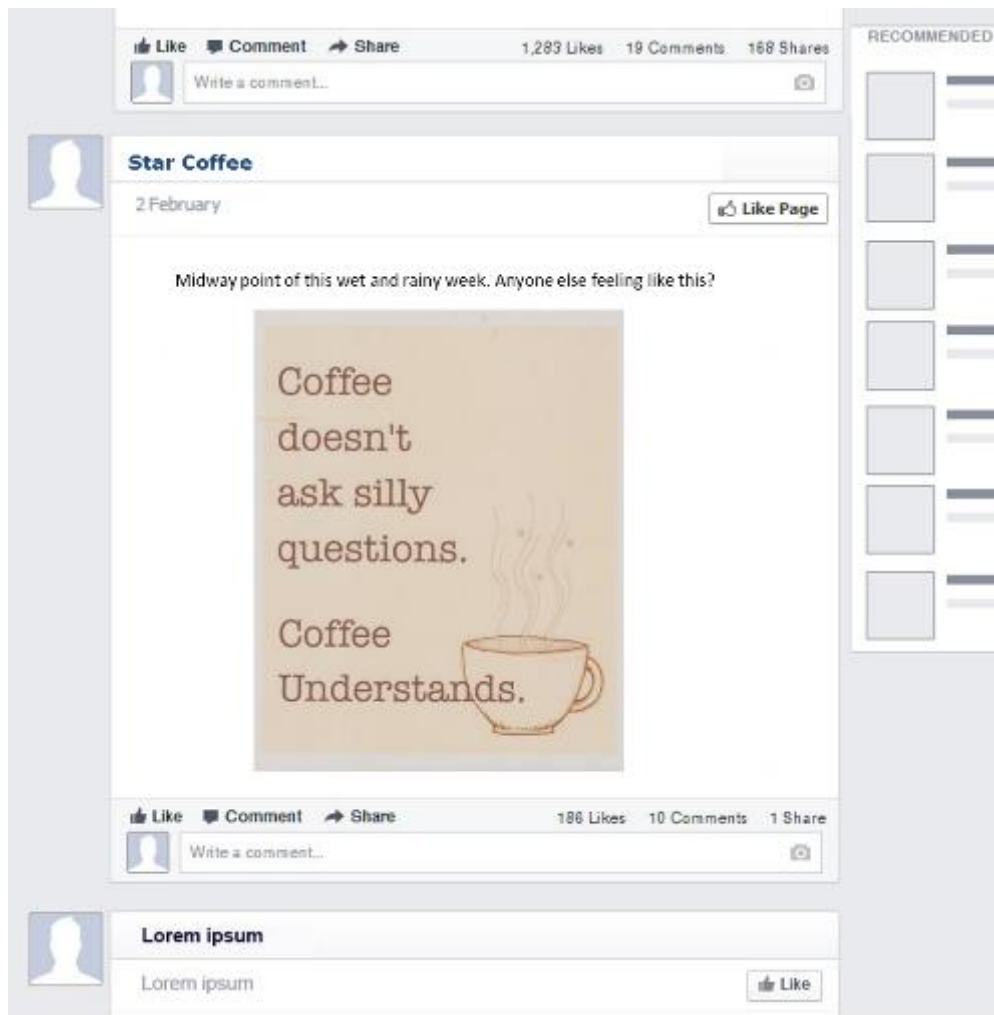
Write a comment...

RECOMMENDED

346

8. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the “ Like Page ” button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



9. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge COFFEE SHOPS against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me COFFEE SHOPS are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

10. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

11. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

12. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

13. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how socially distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Social distance refers the perceived similarity with those around you, in this case the content from the Facebook brand page that you just saw.

Very socially Distant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very socially Close

14. What type of post did you just evaluate?

Sponsored-Paid by the brand

Organic – Shared by a friend

I don't know

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below.

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

Appendix 3 – Temporal Immediacy Survey

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

7. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ Yes, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ No, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

8. What is your age?

9. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

8. What is your first language?

15. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes

No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

16. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following **breaking news post from a popular news site**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

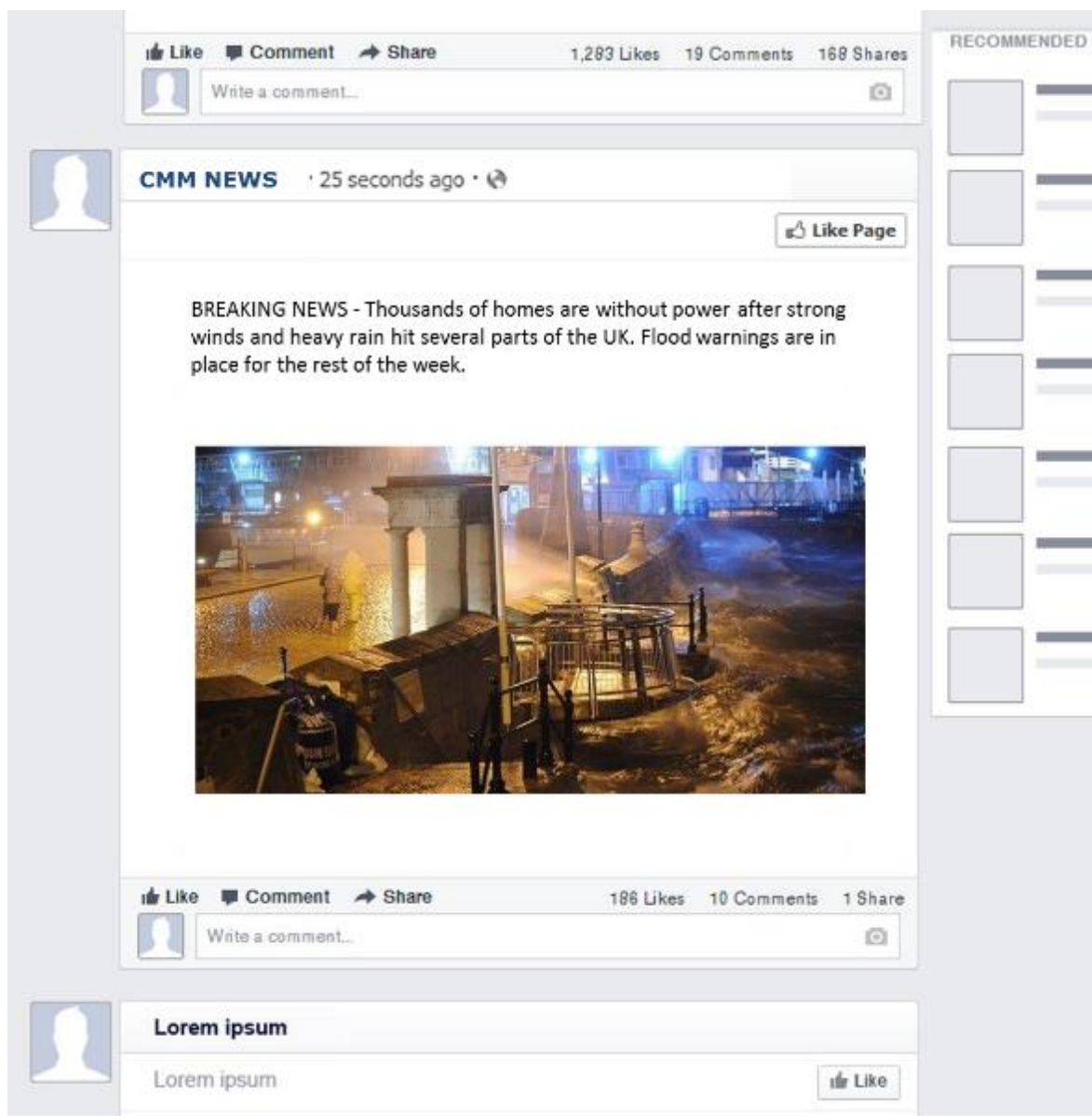
Page Name	Post's image
Page Picture	Post's number of "Likes"
"Like Page" Button	Post's number of "comments"
Post's content	Post's number of "Shares"
Time/date the post was published	



SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

17. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post about recent news if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



18. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post about recent news if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the “ Like Page ” button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share

1,283 Likes19 Comments168 Shares

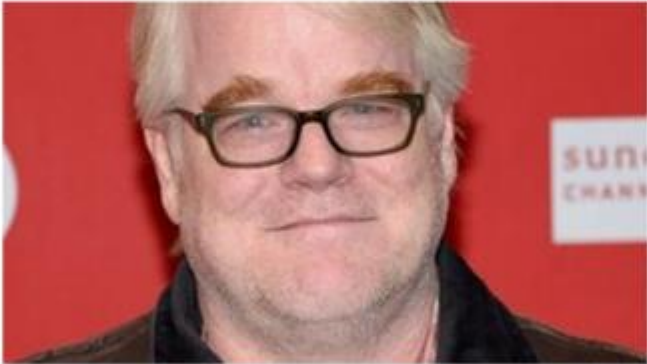
Write a comment...

CMM NEWS

25 seconds ago

Like Page

BREAKING NEWS - Four people have reportedly been arrested in connection with the suspected heroin overdose death of actor Philip Seymour Hoffman.



Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes10 Comments1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

Like

Write a comment...

RECOMMENDED

357

19. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge NEWS SITES against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me NEWS SITES are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

20. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

21. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

22. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

23. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how distant/close in time you perceived the brand page post to be?

Very Distant in Time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Close in Time

24. What types of posts did you just evaluate?

Breaking news

Last month's news

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

15. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

16. What is your age?

17. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

18. What is your first language?

19. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

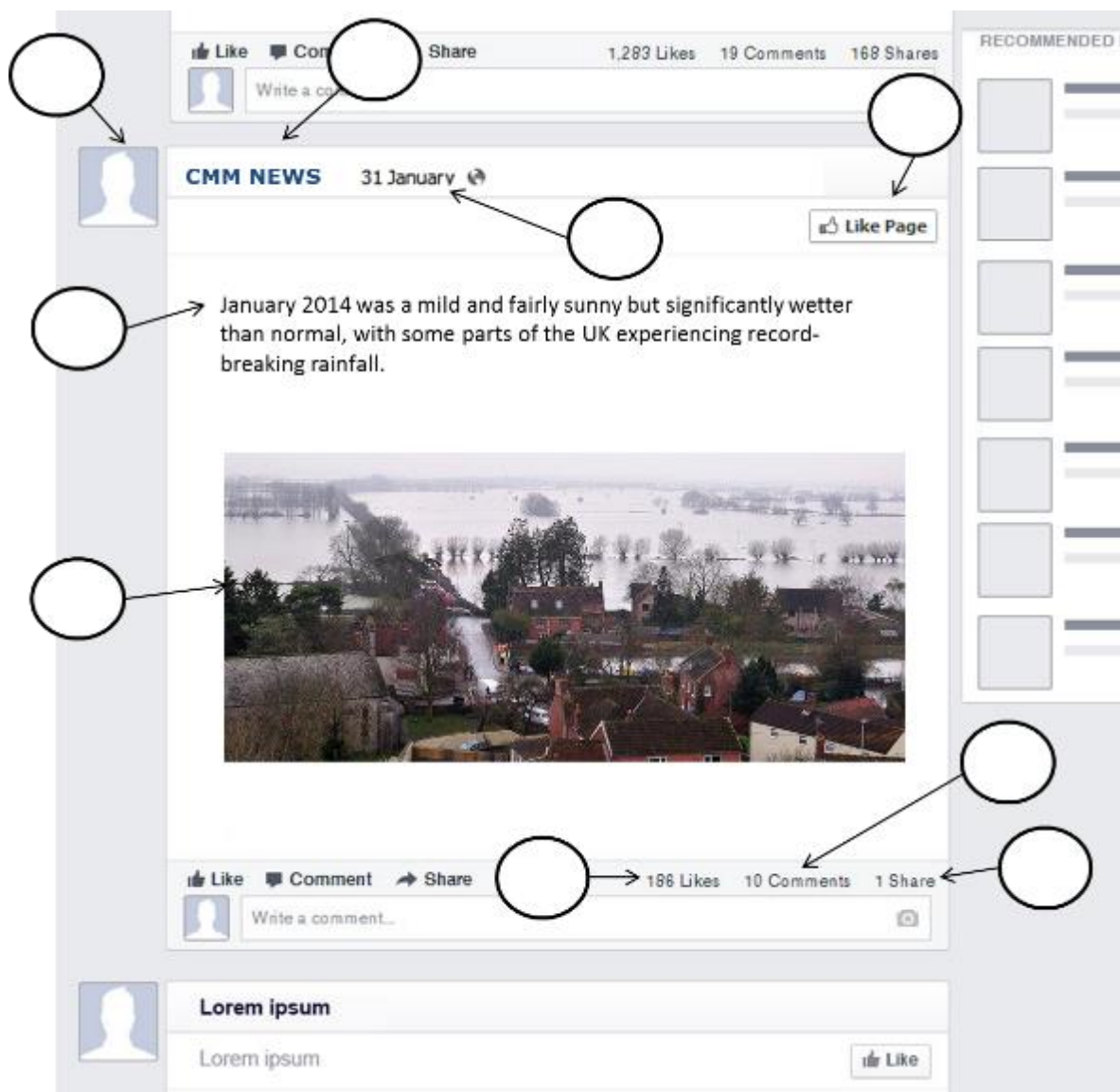
SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

20. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post **taken from a news site on January**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Profile Name	Post's image
Profile Picture	Post's number of "Likes"
"Like Page" Button	Post's number of "comments"
Post's content	Post's number of "Shares"
Time/Date the post was published	

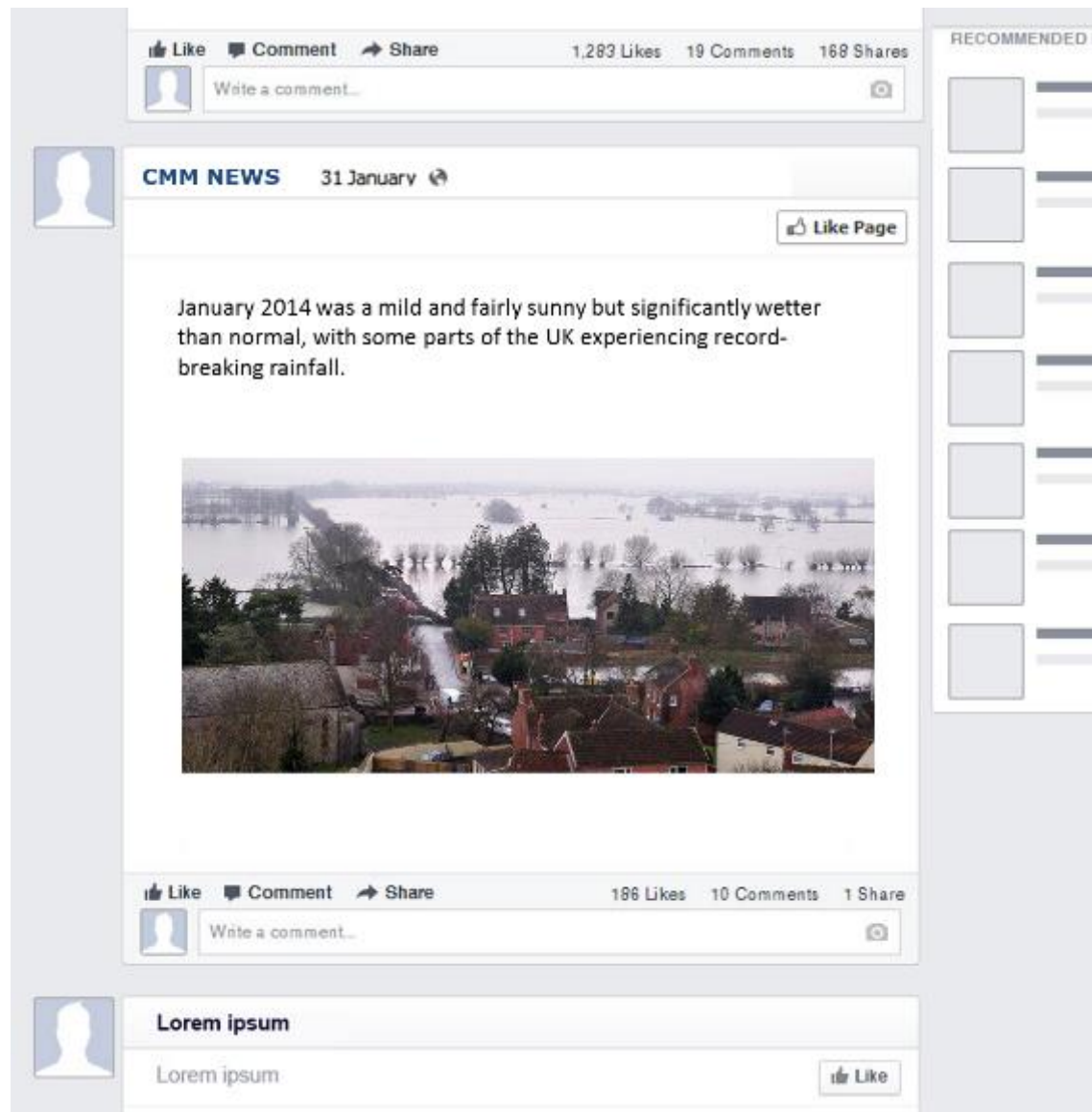


SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

21. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post about last month's news if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being "Very Unlikely" and 7 being "Very likely")

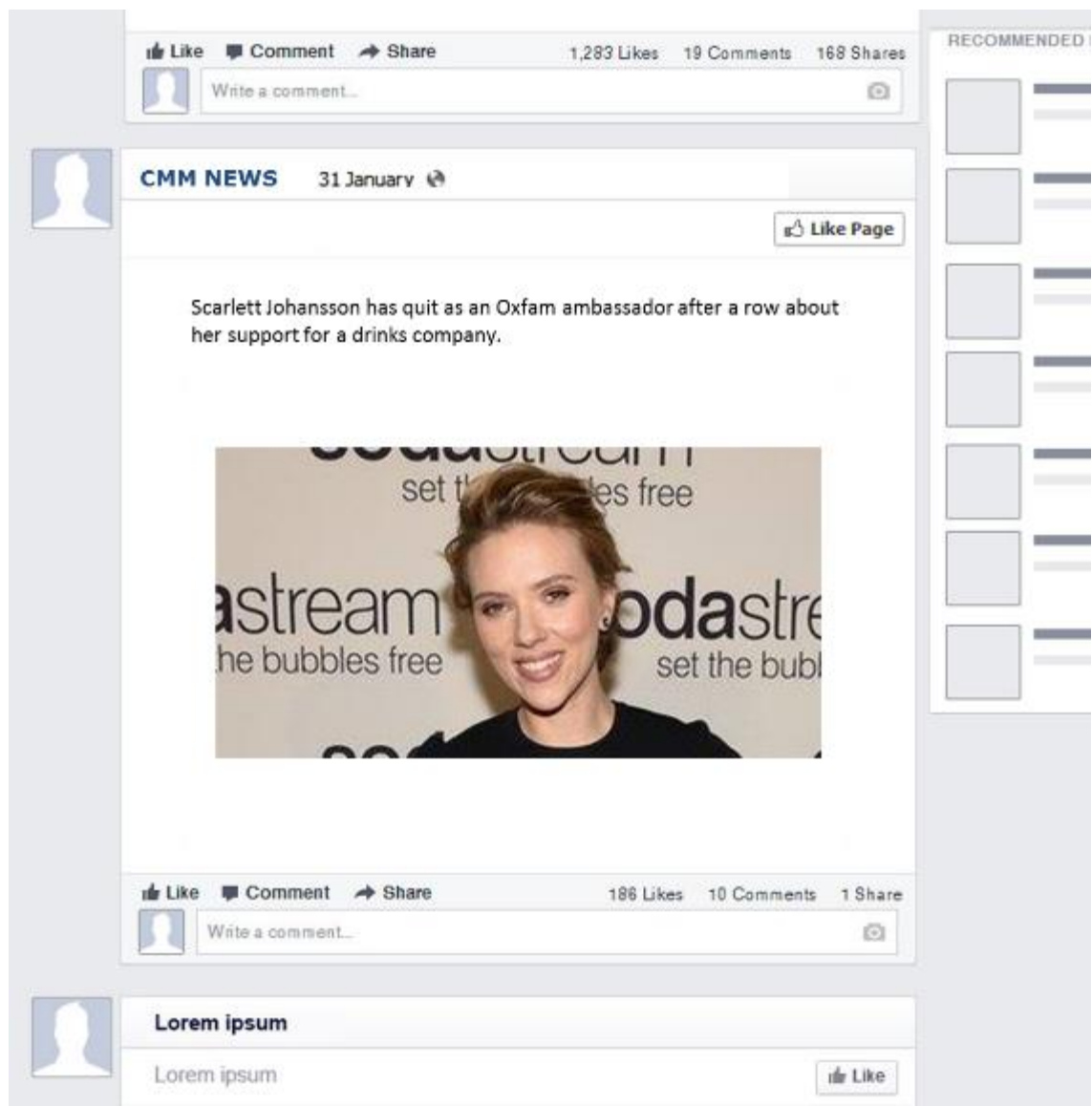
I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

I would click on the “**Like Page**” button Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
on the top of this post



Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post about last month's news if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being "Very Unlikely" and 7 being "Very likely")

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



22. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge NEWS SITES against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me NEWS SITES are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

23. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

24. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

25. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

26. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how distant/close in time you perceived the brand page post to be?

Very Distant in Time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Close in Time

27. What types of posts did you just evaluate?

Breaking news

Last month's news

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below.

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

The anatomy of a Facebook post

Thank you for participating in this survey. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. This study is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD in Marketing at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the different elements that are present on a Facebook post and their effects on certain online behaviours.

The survey is structured in five sections with an estimated completion time of 10 minutes. Section one will ask you demographic questions. Section two will show you a Facebook post and you will be asked to rank the different elements that are found in that post. Section four will look at how you would react to certain content. Finally, section five will focus on your attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

1. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ **Yes**, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ **No**, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is your first language?

5. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 2: THE ANATOMY OF A FACEBOOK POST

6. There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following **post from a popular news site**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 8 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 8 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 8 the LEAST important. You may do so by locating a number inside the circles OR by using the table below.

Please note that as this is a ranking each number can be only allocated to one element (i.e. there cannot be two elements ranked number 1).

List of elements on a Facebook post

Page Name

Page Picture

“Like Page” Button

Post’s content

Post’s image

Post’s number of “Likes”

Post’s number of “comments”

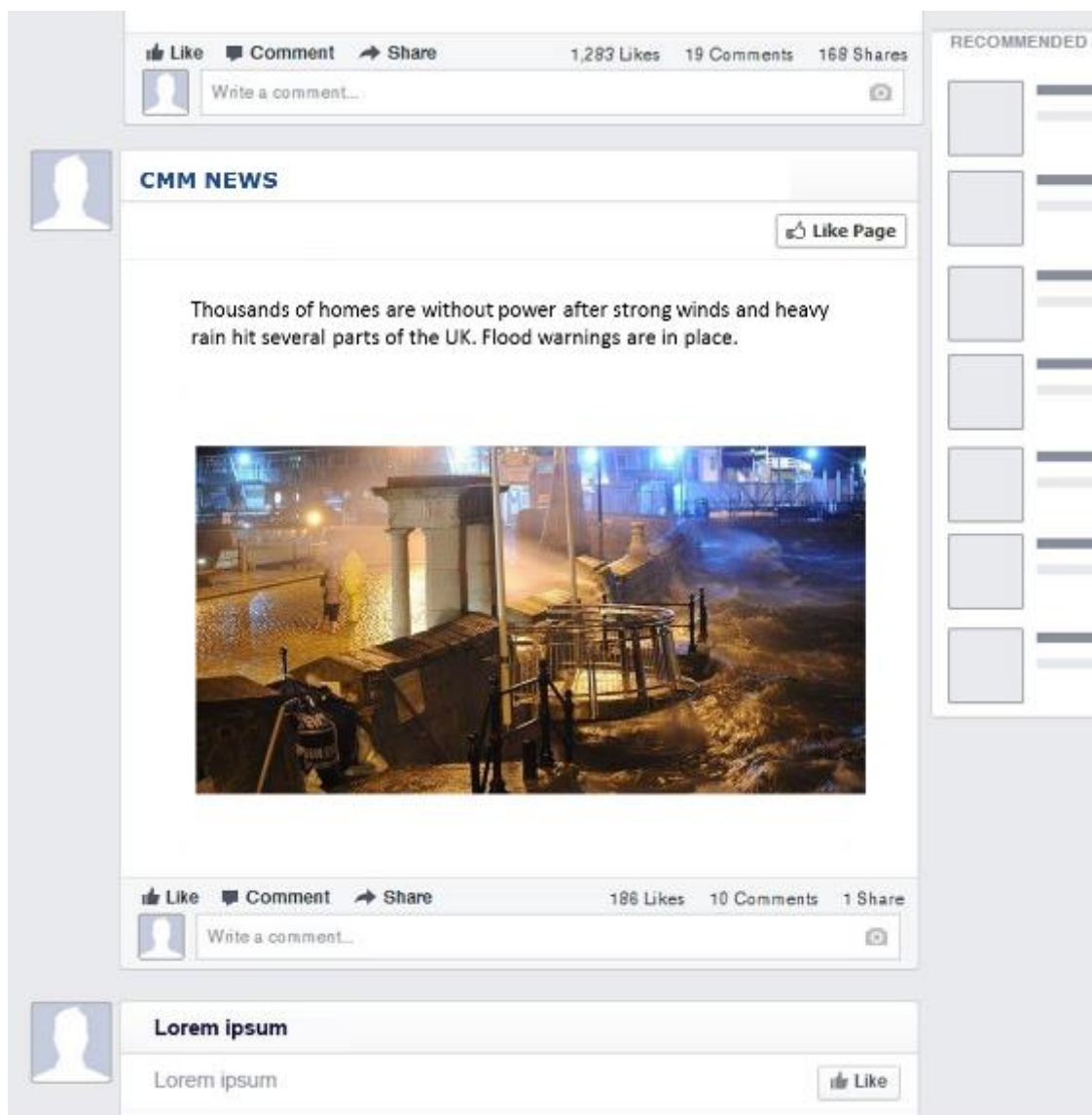
Post’s number of “Shares”



SECTION 3: INTERACTION WITH A FACEBOOK POST

7. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely



8. Please circle the number that best represents how likely/unlikely you would react to this post if it appeared on your Facebook wall. (1 being “Very Unlikely” and 7 being “Very likely”)

I would click on the " Like " button of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the " Like Page " button on the top of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Like

Comment

Share


1,283 Likes19 Comments168 Shares

Write a comment...

CMM NEWS

Like Page

Scarlett Johansson has quit as an Oxfam ambassador after a row about her support for a drinks company.



Like

Comment

Share

186 Likes10 Comments1 Share

Write a comment...

Lorem ipsum

Like

Lorem ipsum

RECOMMENDED

375

9. The purpose of this section is to measure a person's interest in certain category. To take this measure, we need you to judge NEWS SITES against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive the category.

To me NEWS SITES are:

important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unimportant
boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	interesting
relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	irrelevant
exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unexciting
means nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	means a lot to me
appealing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unappealing
fascinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mundane
worthless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	valuable
involving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	uninvolving
not needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	needed

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 4: YOUR FACEBOOK USAGE

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

10. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

11. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

12. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 5: Final section

This is the final section of the study. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this survey.

13. In your opinion, the purpose of this survey was to:

Please indicate how distant/close in time you perceived the brand page post to be?

Very Distant in Time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Close in Time

14. What type of posts did you just evaluate?

Breaking news

Last month's news

FINAL DISCLOSURE

Thank you once again for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effects a brand's immediacy on different consumer behaviours on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please tick the box below

☐ I'd like to get the results from this survey

Email address:

Appendix 4: Study 1

Assessing data sufficiency

Presence of Outliers

Data was also analysed to identify the presence of outliers. From the data set compiled in this study, 14 cases were removed. Outliers were identified standardising the dependent variables using Z scores and removing all values that had Z scores > 3.5 and Z scores < -3.5 (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Table 46 below shows the number of cases that were removed on each of the dependent variables.

Table 46- Outliers per engagement behaviour (study 1 - physical immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Number of outliers removed
Physical Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	1
		Intention to Comment post	2
		Intention to Share post	2
		Intention to Like Brand Page	-
		Outliers removed	5
	2	Intention to Like post	1
		Intention to Comment post	2
		Intention to Share post	3
		Intention to Like Brand Page	3
		Outliers removed	9

Normality of distribution

One of the assumptions of ANOVA is normality distribution of the dependent variable. However, this assumption was not met by Study 1. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the one-way ANOVA F Test will not be seriously affected even when the population distribution is skewed as long as sample sizes are not small -more than 5- (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Earlier in this section it was determined that sample size allocated to each of the condition met the requirements based on the number of conditions and statistical power sought. Therefore, no further transformations were pursued and the data from the study was used for further testing

Homogeneity of variance

The final assumption that needs to be met is homogeneity of variance. This was tested using Levene's test of Homogeneity of variance. In Table 47 the dependent variables that did not meet this assumption should not be tested using ordinary analysis of variance but instead the robust test Brown-Forsythe, which uses the median instead of the mean to calculate the F statistic, those variables were highlighted on the table below (Field et al., 2012).

Table 47- Homogeneity of variance (study 1 - physical immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig
Physical Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	5.13	2	74	.01*
		Intention to Comment post	3.25	2	73	.04*
		Intention to Share post	.46	2	73	.63
		Intention to Like Brand Page	1.37	2	75	.26
	2	Intention to Like post	3.11	2	75	.05*
		Intention to Comment post	2.92	2	74	.06
		Intention to Share post	7.11	2	73	.00*

Appendix 5: Study 2

Assessing data sufficiency

Presence of Outliers

Data was also analysed to identify the presence of outliers. From the data set compiled in this study, 26 cases were removed. Outliers were identified standardising the dependent variables using Z scores and removing all values that had Z scores > 3.5 and Z scores < -3.5 (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Table 46 below shows the number of cases that were removed on each of the dependent variables.

Table 48- Outliers per engagement behaviour (study 2 – social immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Number of outliers removed
Social Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	2
		Intention to Comment post	5
		Intention to Share post	5
		Intention to Like Brand Page	2
		Outliers removed	14
	2	Intention to Like post	2
		Intention to Comment post	4
		Intention to Share post	4
		Intention to Like Brand Page	2
		Outliers removed	12

Normality of distribution

One of the assumptions of ANOVA is normality distribution of the dependent variable. However, this assumption was not met by Study 1. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the one-way ANOVA F Test will not be seriously affected even when the population distribution is skewed as long as sample sizes are not small -more than 5- (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Earlier in this section it was determined that sample size allocated to each of the condition met the requirements based on the number of conditions and statistical power sought. Therefore, no further transformations were pursued and the data from the study was used for further testing.

Homogeneity of variance

The final assumption that needs to be met is homogeneity of variance. This was tested using Levene's test of Homogeneity of variance. In Table 47 the dependent variables that did not meet this assumption should not be tested using ordinary analysis of variance but instead the robust test Brown-Forsythe, which uses the median instead of the mean to calculate the F statistic, those variables were highlighted on the table below (Field et al., 2012).

Table 49- Homogeneity of variance (study 2 - social immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig
Social Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	1.36	2	122	.26
		Intention to Comment post	2.65	2	119	.08
		Intention to Share post	3.42	2	119	.04
		Intention to Like Brand Page	1.77	2	122	.18
	2	Intention to Like post	6.76	2	120	.00
		Intention to Comment post	10.75	2	120	.00
		Intention to Share post	4.96	2	120	.01

Appendix 6: Study 3

Assessing data sufficiency

Presence of Outliers

Data was also analysed to identify the presence of outliers. From the data set compiled in this study, 9 cases were removed. Outliers were identified standardising the dependent variables using Z scores and removing all values that had Z scores > 3.5 and Z scores < -3.5 (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Table 466 below shows the number of cases that were removed on each of the dependent variables.

Table 50- Outliers per engagement behaviour (Study 3- temporal immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Number of outliers removed
Temporal Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	1
		Intention to Comment post	1
		Intention to Share post	1
		Intention to Like Brand Page	1
		Outliers removed	4
	2	Intention to Like post	-
		Intention to Comment post	3
		Intention to Share post	2
		Intention to Like Brand Page	-
		Outliers removed	5

Normality of distribution

One of the assumptions of ANOVA is normality distribution of the dependent variable. However, this assumption was not met by Study 1. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the

one-way ANOVA F Test will not be seriously affected even when the population distribution is skewed as long as sample sizes are not small -more than 5- (Iglewicz and Hoaglin, 1993). Earlier in this section it was determined that sample size allocated to each of the condition met the requirements based on the number of conditions and statistical power sought. Therefore, no further transformations were pursued and the data from the study was used for further testing

Homogeneity of variance

The final assumption that needs to be met is homogeneity of variance. This was tested using Levene's test of Homogeneity of variance. In Table 47 the dependent variables that did not meet this assumption should not be tested using ordinary analysis of variance but instead the robust test Brown-Forsythe, which uses the median instead of the mean to calculate the F statistic, those variables were highlighted on the table below (Field et al., 2012).

Table 51- Homogeneity of variance (study 3 - temporal immediacy)

Study	Fan Page	Dependent Variable	Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig
Temporal Immediacy	1	Intention to Like post	.45	2	87	.64
		Intention to Comment post	.73	2	87	.49
		Intention to Share post	.88	2	87	.42
		Intention to Like Brand Page	.58	2	87	.56
	2	Intention to Like post	.38	2	88	.69
		Intention to Comment post	2.52	2	88	.09
		Intention to Share post	3.18	2	86	.05

Appendix 7: Survey of pilot study 1

Text and image balance in Social Media

Thank you for participating in this experiment. This page has important information about the survey we would like to invite you to be part of. The experiment is part of a series of studies aimed towards a PhD at Heriot-Watt University. This study focuses on the balance between image size and text in branded messages in social networking sites.

The experiment is structured in four sections. In the first section you will be asked for some demographic information. The second section will ask you to choose from a range of images in environments that are similar to popular social networking sites. The third section will ask for details about your use of social networking sites. Finally, the fourth section focuses on your experience in this study and an opt-out choice is given at the end of the section.

All responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or choose to discontinue your participation at any time during the course of the survey, you will be able to do so. If you wish to participate in the draw for a £50 Amazon voucher you will be required to provide your email address at the end of the survey.

If you would like to access the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University.

Please tick the "Agree" box to confirm that you understand the information above and that you are ready to begin. Once again thank you for taking part in this study.

10. Do you agree to take part in this experiment?

☐ Yes, I agree to take part in this experiment.

☐ No, I do not agree to take part in this experiment.

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

SECTION 1: Demographic information

Please complete the following questions:

11. What is your age?

12. What is your gender? Please tick the appropriate box

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

13. Do you live in Edinburgh?

Yes (**Go to question 4.1**)

No (**Go to question 4.2**)

8.1 How long have you lived in Edinburgh? Please specify in number of years and months (e.g. If you have been living for 2.5 years in Edinburgh then write: 2 years and 6 months)

Years

Months

Please go to question **FIVE**.

8.2 If you do not live in Edinburgh, please specify where do you live (question 4.2) and for how long you have been living there (next question).

I live in:

8.3 I have been living there for:

Years

Months

Please specify in number of years and months (e.g. if you have been living for 2.5 years in the place you mentioned in question 4.2 then write: 2 years and 6 months)

Please go to question **FIVE**.

9 What is your first language?

6. Are you a Facebook member? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes

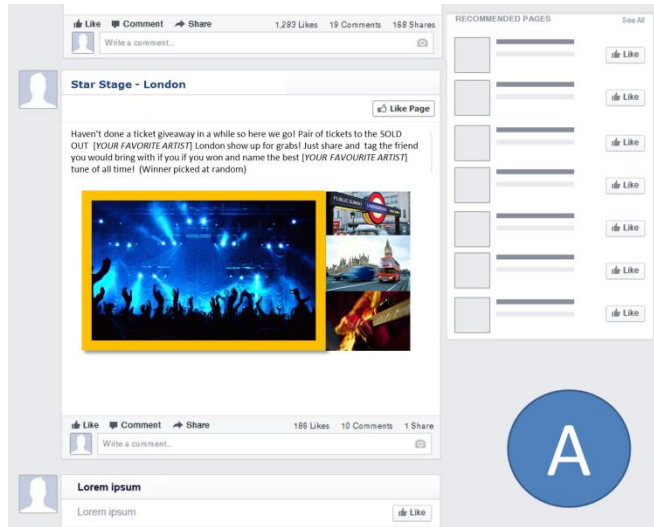
No

END OF SECTION ONE. PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION TWO (NEXT PAGE)

SECTION 2: Image and text size in social networking sites

Please imagine that Facebook is allowing brands to select the size of the images and text in their posts. An **established London-based concert venue** is trying to determine the ideal balance between the two, aiming to increase the attention of users without being more intrusive than current posts. You have been provided with EXTRA MATERIAL for this section so that you can better appreciate each configuration of TEXT and IMAGE.

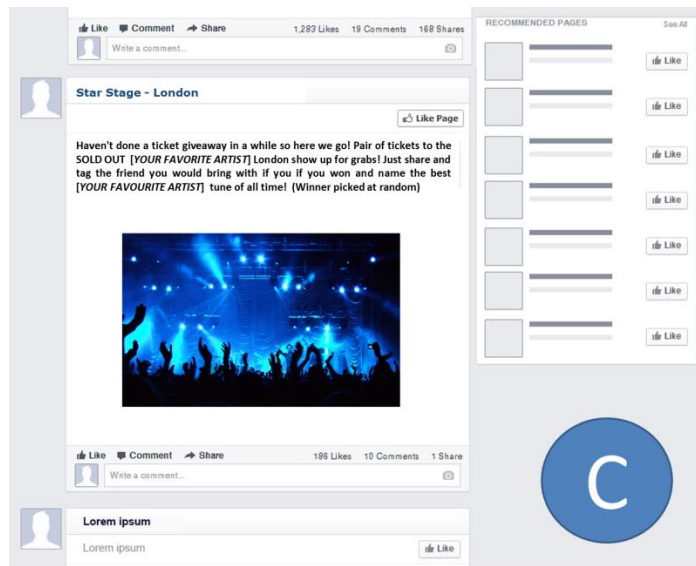
7. Looking at these four options, please tick ONE circle with the configuration that you would recommend the brand to use on the main column of your social networking site? Look at the text and image carefully. **Spend as much time** as needed.



**Please go to Section 2A
(page: 6)**



**Please go to Section 2B (page:
7)**



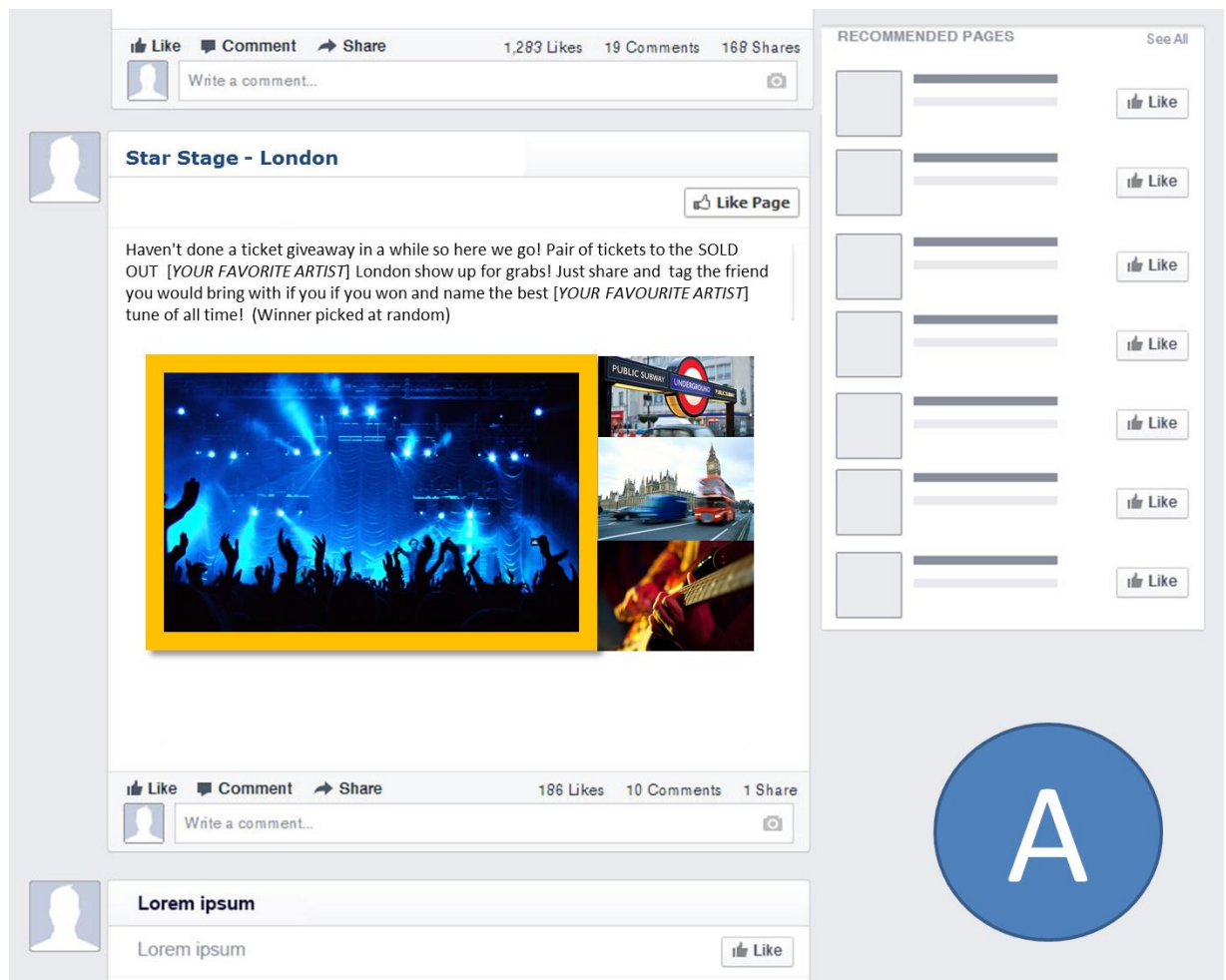
Please go to Section 2C
(page: 8)



Please go to Section 2D
(page: 9)

SECTION 2A

The picture below represents the choice that you made in section 2. Please answer the following questions keeping this text and image size configuration in mind.

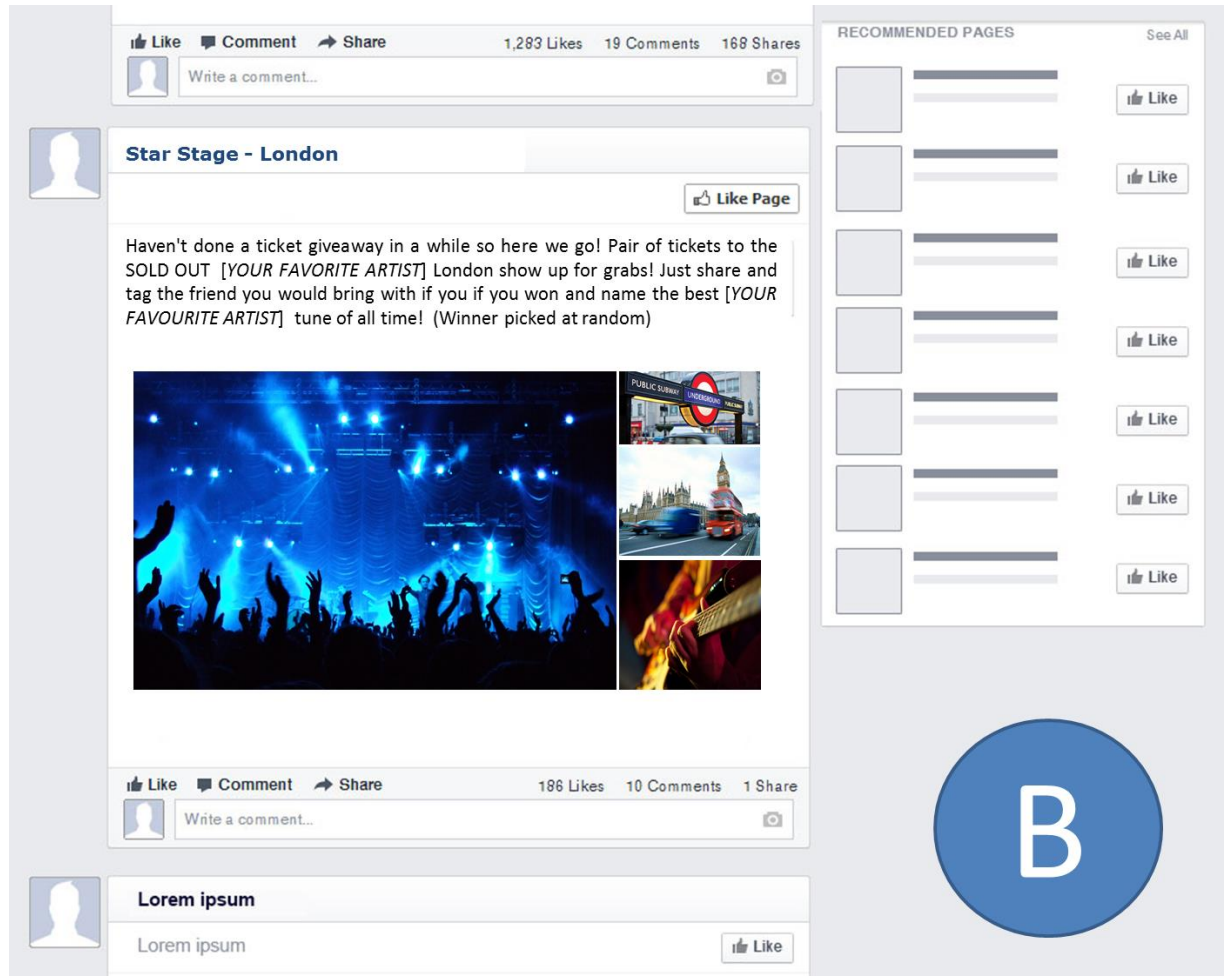


How likely or unlikely are you to act as the following statements imply:

If I was not following this brand, I would click on the "Like Page" button at the top right of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the "Like" button under the image of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post into my Facebook wall	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would like to participate in the promotion of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

SECTION 2B

The picture below represents the choice that you made in section 2. Please answer the following questions keeping this text and image size configuration in mind.



How likely or unlikely are you to act as the following statements imply:

If I was not following this brand, I would click on the "Like Page" button at the top right of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the "Like" button under the image of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would share this post into my Facebook wall	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would like to participate in the promotion of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

END OF SECTION TWO. PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION THREE (PAGE 10)

SECTION 2C

The picture below represents the choice that you made in section 2. Please answer the following questions keeping this text and image size configuration in mind.



How likely or unlikely are you to act as the following statements imply:

If I was not following this brand, I would click on the "Like Page" button at the top right of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the "Like" button under the image of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

I would share this post into my Facebook wall	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would like to participate in the promotion of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

END OF SECTION TWO. PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION THREE (PAGE 10)

SECTION 2D

The picture below represents the choice that you made in section 2. Please answer the following questions keeping this text and image size configuration in mind.



How likely or unlikely are you to act as the following statements imply:

If I was not following this brand, I would click on the "Like Page" button at the top right of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would click on the "Like" button under the image of this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would comment something on this post.	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

I would share this post into my Facebook wall	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely
I would like to participate in the promotion of this post	Very Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

END OF SECTION TWO. PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION THREE (PAGE 10)

SECTION 3: Your Facebook usage

Please answer the following questions regarding your Facebook usage.

8. About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes.
(Please provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	----------	-----------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	------------------

9. In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

10. Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if your strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

11. Please indicate how geographically distant/close you perceived the brand page to be?

Very Geographically Distant 1 2 3 4 5 Very Geographically Close

PLEASE GO TO NEXT SECTION

SECTION 4: Final section

This is the final section of the experiment. Before giving you the alternative to opt-out, we would like you to share additional generic information about this experiment.

12. In your opinion, this experiment intends to find out the effect of:

PLEASE GO TO NEXT PAGE

FINAL DISCLOSURE AND OPT-OUT

Thank you once again for taking part in this experiment. The purpose of this research was to measure the effects of brand immediacy in the form of physical distance on consumer engagement with a brand on Facebook. If you would like to know the results of this research, please contact me directly at rp133@hw.ac.uk.

In addition, there will be a draw for a £50 Amazon voucher that will be held on the 29th of November. If you wish to participate please leave your email address below. You will receive a link with the livestream of the draw, and you will be notified if you win this draw.

Email address:

As mentioned at the beginning of this questionnaire, there is the alternative to opt-out from participating in this experiment. If you would like that your information is not stored and destroyed please tick the box below:

☐ I do not wish to participate in this experiment.

Appendix 8: Focus groups guide

Brand Fan page engagement

This focus group session aims to explore the elements that are important for Facebook users when interacting with a Fan page. All the information shared here will be used for academic purpose and will be anonymised.

Demographic information

Age: _____

Gender: Female / Male

Occupation: _____

About how many total Facebook friends do you have? Please tick ONE of the boxes. (If not sure, provide your best estimate)

10 or less	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 150	151 to 200	201 to 250	251 to 300	301 to 400	More than 400
---------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	---------------------

In the past week, how many hours (on average) have you spent on Facebook?

hours

Please answer the following question regarding your attitudes towards Facebook. The scale goes from 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement to 5 if you strongly agree with it.

Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

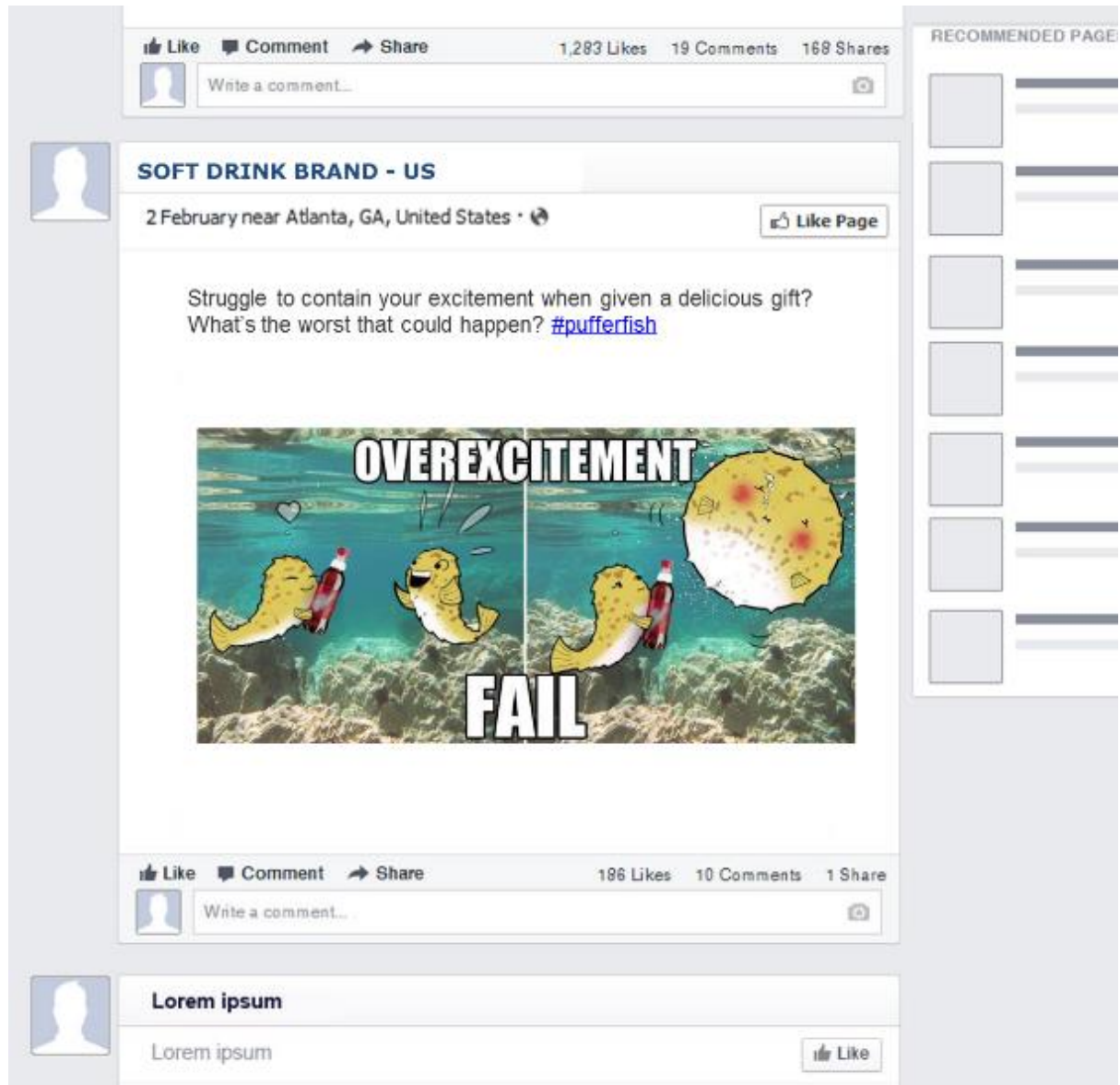
Do you follow many brands on Facebook or other social media platforms?

What elements influence your interaction with brands on Facebook?

The image below is from a Facebook Fan page for a beverage brand. What elements are important to you in order to decide to follow or not that page?



Imagine that you follow the page of your favourite beverage, and that content appears on your Facebook timeline like in the example below. What elements will make you stop and look at it? What elements are likely to make you interact with that post (liking, commenting on the content, and sharing)?



There are different elements that are part of a Facebook post. Please have a look at the following post taken from **an American brand of soft drinks**. After looking at the post below, **please rank the 9 elements** identified in this sample post from 1 to 9 based on their importance to you, being 1 the MOST important and 9 the LEAST important. You may do so by putting a number inside the circles



Does the fact that this page is an American one matter to you? Would you interact differently if this was the same brand but physically closer to you (i.e. Scotland, or the country you currently live in)?

Would it matter if the content being shared was coming from a friend of yours?

Would it matter to you if the content being shared was from a recent event vs. an event last month?

I give consent that the discussion in this focus group is used for academic purpose.

YES / NO Signature: _____

Appendix 9: Immediacy and first language.

The composition of the sample was not entirely of native speakers. This could have had an effect on their understanding of the survey and other cultural differences could also have affected the dependent variables being measured in these studies. For this reasons a test to determine differences between native English speakers and speakers of other languages is conducted. Due to the high fragmentation of other languages present in the sample, participants were classified in two cohorts (English speakers and non-English speakers). The one-way ANOVA was conducted between each dependent variable and the two cohorts as independent variables. Results for the study manipulating physical immediacy showed no significant difference between means of those two groups.

A similar procedure and testing was conducted in the study manipulating social immediacy. Only one of the dependent variables showed a significant difference between the two means, with English speakers scoring higher intentions to Like Fan Page 1 ($M=2.57$) than non-English speakers ($M=1.63$, $F(1,122)=5.79$, $p<0.05$).